Film
QUARTERLY

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Film Quarterly

BOOKS, BOOKS, MORE BOOKS

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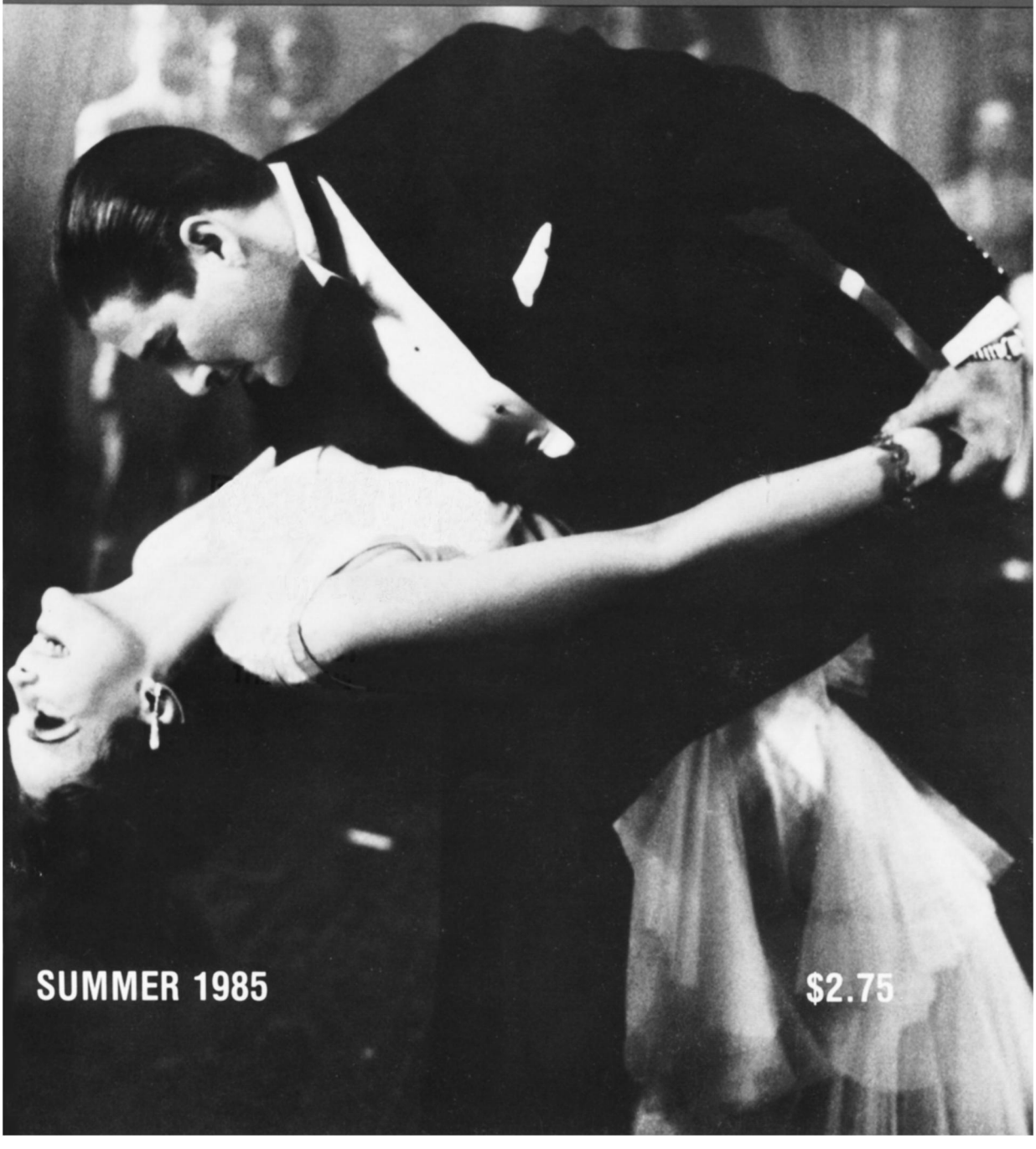
THE COTTON CLUB

STOP MAKING SENSE

CAN SHE BAKE A CHERRY PIE?



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ARTICLE

The Liberation of Echo: A New Hearing for Film Sound
WILLIAM JOHNSON 2
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Stop Making Sense THOMAS DOHERTY 12
The Talking Heads film revitalizes the dormant rock documentary form and avoids rock-video cliches.

The Cotton Club ALBERT JOHNSON 16
Coppola's gangster film betrays the dramatic and musical promise of its title, though it achieves a few truncated marvelous moments.

Can She Bake a Cherry Pie? PETER HOGUE 19
Henry Jaglom's offhand story of a contemporary romance is told with multiple time schemes and points of view that offer provocative complications.

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COVER: Diane Lane as Vera Cicero and Richard Gere as Dixie Dwyer, in Francis Coppola's *The Cotton Club* (see page 16).

CONTRIBUTORS

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SOUND/IMAGE/PRINT

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FILM QUARTERLY (ISSN 0015-1386) is published quarterly at the subscription prices given below by the University of California Press, Berkeley, California 94720. Second-class postage paid at Berkeley, California, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to **Film Quarterly**, University of California Press, Berkeley CA 94720. $2.75 per copy, $11.00 per year, in the U.S. Elsewhere $13.00 per year. Institutional rates slightly higher. Payment may be made with UNESCO book coupons. Please allow 4 months for first issue to be received. Back issues available at $5.00. Editor: Ernest Callenbach. Assistant to the Editor: Mary Guitar. New York Editor: William Johnson. Los Angeles Editor: Michael Dempsey. Boston Editor: Randall Conrad. London Editor: Colin Young. Rome Editor: Gideon Bachmann. Advisory Editorial Board: Leo Braudy, Andries Deinum, John Fell, Brian Henderson, Albert Johnson, Marsha Kinder, Neal Oxenhandler. Views expressed in signed articles are those of the authors. Indexed in **Art Index, Book Review Index, Film Literature Index, Humanities Index, International Index to Film Periodicals, Monthly Cumulating Periodical Index,** and **Popular Periodical Index.** Printed in U.S.A. Type: Freedmen's Organization, Los Angeles. Printing: Malloy Lithographing. © 1985 by the Regents of the University of California. Back issues subsequent to Volume 18 (1965-1966) can be obtained from the University of California Press.

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WILLIAM JOHNSON

The Liberation of Echo: A New Hearing for Film Sound

Sound has been an integral part of the film for well over half a century, yet most critics and theorists still pay it little more than lip service. Even those who do write perceptively about sound treat it as a secondary attribute, like color, and continue to equate analysis of the image with analysis of the film as a whole.[1]

In recent years attempts have been made to analyze film sound in greater depth, notably in special issues of Yale French Studies[2] and of *Screen*[3] (which I refer to respectively as YFS and SST). Yet even here, contributors either retain the traditional view of sound as appendage to the image or swing to the opposite extreme, making sound the puppeteer of the image. One rare exception to the general trend is Elisabeth Weis's study of Hitchcock's use of sound:[4] although concerned with specifics rather than theory, Weis consistently attributes equal importance to the two channels.

In this article I hope to show that sound in the film is a full and equal partner of the image. The first step is to examine some common misconceptions about the role of sound and indicate why they have remained widespread for so long.

The two main aspects of the traditional view of film sound are what Rick Altman, in the introduction to YFS, refers to as the *historical fallacy* and the *ontological fallacy*. The former consists of regarding the image as primary because it preceded the advent of the sound track. The latter consists of regarding the image as the essence of the film and sound as a pollutant.

As many writers have recognized, the historical fallacy ignores the prevalence of sound during the so-called silent era. In addition to the standard accompaniment of live music, there were experiments with adding sound effects and even live dialogue.[5] Moreover, the prehistory of the cinema had included attempts to marry the recording of images with the recording of sounds: as Balász points out,[6] if those attempts had been successful they would hardly have been rejected in favor of the image alone. After all, the forms of entertainment that influenced the nascent cinema—theater, vaudeville and music hall—all relied heavily on speech, music and sound effects.

It is a widely held assumption that film-makers took a long time to realize the potential of the sound track. Thus Mitry[7] states: "Except for rare masterpieces . . . , for several years [after the advent of recorded sound] there were only filmed plays and musicals." Yet the transition period was in fact remarkably brief. In 1929, the first year in which Hollywood was fully committed to the sound track, film-makers explored many ways of combining sound and image. They freely used speech and sound effects in outdoor scenes, even in such an unlikely context as Millard Webb's *Glorifying the American Girl* (whose lengthy company picnic sequence challenges just about every stereotype of the early sound film). Speech and sound effects were also freely used with frequent scene changes, camera movement or unusual camera setups (as in Capra's *Flight,* where a dialogue in a hangar is filmed in high-angle long shot). There were also many flirtations with experimental uses of sound. Examples include: synchronizing a source with a "wrong" sound, like the pizzicato playing of fingers on lips in Elsie Janis's *Paramount on Parade;* extradiegetic address of speech to the camera, as in Lubitsch's *The Love Parade;* expressionistic variation of dynamics, as in the well-known "knife" scene in Hitchcock's *Blackmail;* enjambement of sound belonging diegetically to one scene through part of the following scene, as in Sternberg's *Thunderbolt.* By 1931, virtually

all the uses of sound that can be found in narrative films today had already been pioneered. In short, most film-makers adapted rapidly to the sound track—in my view, because it was not an accretion but a completion.

The ontological fallacy is no longer proclaimed so passionately as in the late twenties and early thirties, but it survives in two widespread assumptions: that sound in general plays only a marginal role in film and that synchronized speech in particular is frequently redundant. Since speech comes under fire for other reasons, I deal with it later.

On the question of marginality, a typical assertion is that of Sparshott:[8] "It is the requirements of the visual image that call for the elaboration of equipment and the circumstances of display that are fundamental to cinema. Film sound has no distinctive qualities in itself, and can be meaningfully discussed only as an adjunct to the visual." Even critics who show a greater interest in sound allow it hardly any wider scope than does Sparshott. Thus Raymond Bellour, in his analysis of *Gigi,*[9] automatically rejects any possibility that the structure of this musical might depend significantly on the sound track: "The image is sovereign on the level of syntagmatic demarcation. . . ." Yet in Demy's *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg,* to take a clear-cut example, the duration of the whole film and of many individual scenes, the tempo of many actions and gestures, and the season and time of day were all determined to a large extent by the prerecorded sound track. In any instance where the sound may have a predetermined duration or structure the image may be viewed as the adjunct. It is the ontological fallacy that leads critics to analyze films as if the image were determined first, independently of the sound.

The same assumption also underlies—and undermines—several of the contributions to YFS. Claudia Gorbman refers[10] persistently to "film/music relationships" as if the music were not part of the film. Daniel Percheron declares[11] that "the opposition, sound 'on'/ sound 'off' . . . depends on the image, and consequently testifies to the image's primacy." Yet this primacy exists only in the nomenclature, not in the film: it is just as accurate to consider the image "on" or "off" the sound as the reverse. Metz, who recognizes this particular bias, unintentionally promotes another as he examines[12] what appears to be our Western cultural valuation of "visual objects" over aural objects: "From a logical point of view, 'buzzing' *is* an object, an acoustic object in the same way that a tulip is a visual object. . . . As soon as it becomes a question of naming the concept of aural object itself, it is necessary to add to the word 'object' the epithet 'aural,' . . . while no precision is required for that which should logically be called 'visual object': we consider it self-evident that a banner is an object (with no adjective needed) but we hesitate over a hoot; it's an infra-object, an object that is only aural." What Metz fails to realize is that "tulip" and "banner" refer not to *visual* objects but to objects that may be perceived by various senses. Thus the visual equivalents of "buzzing" and "hoot" would include not "tulip" or "banner" but "flash," "blur," and "red."

Altman sets up another specious antithesis[13] by stating that image-without-sound and sound-without-image are not complementary and symmetrical because "the former is a perfectly common situation in nature (a person standing quietly) while the latter is an impossibility (sounds are always produced by something imageable). Thus the completion of the former paradigm depends on the object within the image, while the completion of the latter depends on the auditor (who must look around and *find* the source of the sound). Images call for no action on the part of the auditor." Yet many sounds are *not* imageable in any practical sense, beginning with the "room presence" that stands for silence and continuing through sounds with vast or nebulous sources, such as wind or thunder, or hidden sources, as in most powered vehicles, phones, radios, etc. Moreover, sound-without-(visible)-image has its counterpart in images where the source is visible but the sound is suppressed, as when characters speak at a distance from the camera or behind glass; and then the image does call for action on the part of the auditor, as he or she tries to supply the missing sound. By contrast, there can be scenes in which the auditor is under no compulsion to find the

As we go to press, Columbia University Press has just released an anthology of articles, *Film Sound: Theory and Practice.* William Johnson will review this volume for us in our following issue.

source of a sound "off." A classic example is the ending of Robson's *The Seventh Victim* when the sound of an overturned chair behind a closed door gives the auditor all the necessary information—that a character has hanged herself.

If sound does have equal ontological status with the image, it may be wondered why the assumption of image primacy is so widespread. Sparshott alludes to one reason in the statement cited earlier: "the circumstances of display that are fundamental to the cinema." In other words, the layout of the movie theater, especially the seating, is determined by the image. But this would imply primacy only if it conflicted with aural needs, which it does not, since the nature of sound propagation and perception imposes few constraints on the seating. In any case, the typical movie theater follows the same basic seating pattern as the legitimate theater, the music hall and the concert hall, in all of which sound is paramount.

A second reason for the assumption of image primacy is that full acceptance of sound would seem to validate the occasional attempts of other sensory channels (smell and touch) to enter the film process. Although such attempts have led nowhere, couldn't technological advances one day bring us smell-on-film and touch-on-film? Don't arguments against these other senses echo the pronouncements of many twenties critics that sound would be a passing fad?

There are nevertheless good reasons for believing that sound and image belong together in the film while the other senses will never play more than a novelty role. Taste and the various senses of touch are localized in or on the body, so that in any realistic film the "taster/feeler" would have to be identified with one character at a time (a problem that Aldous Huxley glosses over in describing the feelies of *Brave New World*). Smell is the only other sense that can consistently receive information from a distance, like vision and hearing, but its chemical means of transmission makes it slow to take effect and cumbersome to control. (Direct neuronal stimulation would bypass these difficulties only to raise greater ones.) Psychophysically, vision and hearing carry far more information than the other senses: the channel capacity is 40 bits per second for the eyes and 30 bits per second for the ears; third place goes to the skin with only 5 bits per second, while taste and smell are estimated at 1 bit per second each.[14] Image and sound can be made to carry information rapidly and precisely to viewers/auditors who, without special training, can instantly identify a particular face or voice—while most of us cannot distinguish a tulip from a rose with our nostrils alone or a dime from a penny with our fingers.

Valuation of the image over the sound track was reinforced by the circumstances of the latter's birth. Whereas the image had begun as a single strip of film, and could therefore be thought of as an entity even after it became a complex tissue of shots, the sound track started out as an obvious assemblage of diverse sources. The production of film music already existed as a separate enterprise; speech became a prime concern of actors and director; and sound effects fell by default to other specialists. So today, while analysts do not question the unitary status of the image (the *Grande Syntagmatique,* for example, was designed to cover the entire image strip, no matter what variations there might be in content, camera position, lighting or montage), they invariably attack the sound track by dividing it into three virtually autonomous parts—speech, music and sound effects. Thus Stephenson and Debrix[15] can assert, "There are not different kinds of image as there are different kinds of sound—music, speech and noises," forgetting that the image strip may include stock shots, second unit footage, model shots and other special effects, and additional shooting after the first cut. The completed sound track is no more heterogeneous than the image strip.

Even though speech, music and sound effects may be produced separately, they clearly have no functional autonomy. Thus speech can function like sound effects, stressing its concrete origin—a distinctive timber of the voice, or a modifying channel such as a phone, a radio or (as in the Gregoretti episode of *RoGoPaG*) a buzzing throat mike. Speech can also function like music, stressing a rhythmic or intonational pattern, as in the chanting of a crowd or the newsreel narration in *Citizen Kane,* not to mention such experimental uses of rhythmic speech as in Paul

Sharits's *T,O,U,C,H,I,N,G.* Sound effects can function like music, as in the rhythmic hamburger-slapping of the group in Sayles's *Return of the Secaucus Seven,* or most obviously in the opening of Mamoulian's *Love Me Tonight* with its cumulative symphony of hammer blows, pickax crashes, and snores. Sounds can also convey information in place of language, as with coded knockings and horn blowings or with the cultural associations of sirens, whistling, finger tapping, and the like. Music can function like sound effects, either mimetically as in Grémillon's *Remorques,* where choral music is blended with storm noises, or as a diegetic background (the apparent product of a radio, stereo, street band, etc.); and it can be made to carry coded information, not only through such familiar "words" as the Wedding March and the Marseillaise but also by more individual means, such as the party music that continues faintly through a shot of lonely Sylvia Sidney in Sternberg's *An American Tragedy.*

In spite of this continual overlap of functions, many writers still condemn speech as inherently redundant to the image while accepting music and sound effects. Yet just how much is redundant when we see and hear a character speaking? Even if we can lipread and the character remains in full face, we cannot tell voice quality or intonation without hearing the spoken words. Besides, synchronized speech serves other purposes than the conveying of immediate information. In Hitchcock's *Vertigo,* for example, the deliberate dialogue scenes between James Stewart and Barbara Bel Geddes throw Stewart's growing obsession with Kim Novak into sharp relief.

In recent years, Marxist and Marxist-influenced analysts have reinforced traditional prejudices against film speech by focusing on what they consider its ideological role in capitalist societies, especially the US. In this view, redundancy of sound and image is essential to bourgeois films because it creates an illusion of unity that can assure the viewer/auditor of his/her own unity within the dominant ideology. Thus Stephen Heath asserts:[16] "The stress is everywhere [in the classical cinema] on the unity of sound and image and the voice is the point of that unity: at once subservient to the images and entirely dominant in the dramatic space it opens in them. . . ." Mary Ann Doane goes so far as to say[17] that dialogue is privileged on the sound track in order to "preserve the status of speech as a property right. . . ."

However, the ideological case against synchronous sound rests on shaky evidence. Marxist critics invariably compare the use of sound in the commercial cinema with that in the films of Godard, Straub-Huillet, Oshima and others who work in critical opposition to, though still within, capitalist bourgeois societies. Yet the great majority of films made in other parts of the world display the same traits (including synchronized, privileged speech) that allegedly stigmatize the bourgeois cinema. This is true even of a sophisticated, consciously Marxist film such as Gutiérrez Alea's *Up to a Certain Point.*[18]

In any case, the prevalence of synchronized speech in the commercial film has been exaggerated. In most films, as speaking characters move, turn their heads, are cut "off," etc., synchronization can be identified only intermittently; when sync speech is sustained, it usually challenges the realistic conventions, as in two examples in which Spencer Tracy addresses the camera directly: Cukor's *Edward, My Son* and Minnelli's *Father of the Bride.* Not surprisingly, the most extensive use of sync speech is found in "art" films, such as Malle's *My Dinner with André* and Straub-Huillet's *Class Relations,* and above all in experimental films—Hodgdon's *The Whole Film, A Filmic Relationship* and *A Prepared Text,* Greenaway's *Act of God,* Landow's *Wide Angle Saxon,* and much of Snow's rambling exploration of image-sound relations, *Rameau's Nephew.*

Tom Levin is quite correct when he refers[19] to the "specificity of the acoustic and the visual domains" and states that "the closer word and image are coupled the greater the *contrast* between them becomes manifest." But his conclusion—that this contrast poses a threat to the realistic narrative cinema because it is "an accurate symptom of a culture whose members are alienated from themselves"—would, if true, apply to every film-producing society in the world. In fact, the contrast between sound and image has been

a continuing source of strength in all kinds of films. Sound and image have remained independent not only covertly, by virtue of their separate recording processes, but also to a large extent overtly, in their relations within the finished film. The rest of this article examines the scope of those relations.

Sound and Image Compared

The crucial condition of sound and image in film is that they are both *distinct* and *comparable.*

Points of distinction. Because the image is usually taken as the norm from which sound deviates, differences between the two channels tend to be exaggerated. To deal briefly with some common assumptions: (1) *The image is sharply bounded while sound is not.* But the microphone records a limited field of sound much as the lens records a visual field, even though the two rarely coincide. In any case, reflections, shadows and halation can challenge the sharp boundary of the screen image. (2) *The image is spatial while sound is temporal.* But the image can assume a temporal quality when it is systematically displaced, either by rapid cutting or by camera/lens movement; and sound can indicate spatial shifts when it changes with or within scenes. (3) *The image is susceptible to frequent change by cutting while sound is not* (in a realistic context, at least). But this assumes that cutting is the most important means of film segmentation, and even for the image it is hardly self-evident that a major change during a continuous scene—an explosion of movement, the sudden entry of a character, the switching on or off of lights—marks less of a break than a cut. Fred Mogubgub's *Enter Hamlet* (in which a different picture accompanies each word of the "To be or not to be" soliloquy) serves as a reminder that a continuous but articulated sound may convey the same effect of segmentation as a strip of cut images.

The one important distinction between sound and image stems from their physical origin. The majority of objects that are represented in the photographic image do not generate light but reflect it (and on the screen, the entire image consists of reflected light). By contrast, virtually all objects that emit sounds do so actively, through some kind of movement, and this remains true of the theater loudspeakers that reproduce those sounds. Thus sound tends to be a series of active events that is *experienced* while the image tends to be a static display that is *read.* This distinction enables the two channels to complement each other, carrying large amounts of information without mutual interference.[20]

Points of comparison. These embrace both primary codes—formal or cinematic—and secondary codes—cultural or extracinematic.

At the formal end of the range, sound and image may share the extreme similarity of being either present or absent. The absence is rarely absolute, however: for the image, it consists of the perceptible grayness of the "black" or imageless screen, and for the sound, of a faint background hum. Thus in each channel the *presence* of absence constitutes a ground of comparison with the other.

Sound and image can also be compared in terms of such basic formal parameters as duration, intensity, multiplicity and rate of change. Some of these are directly comparable, such as the duration of an image (event) and of a sound (event), or the multiplicity of elements in each. Others involve synaesthetic equivalences, as between the intensity of the image (brightness) and of the sound (a combination of pitch and loudness). Even in these latter cases, however, the relation is not merely subjective but derives from physically measurable conditions.

As Alan Williams notes briefly in YFS,[21] both sound and image are subject to virtually the same set of manipulations. Just as the camera can be placed at varying distances from the subject, or moved bodily in the process of recording the image, so can the microphone; and the use of unidirectional and omnidirectional mikes corresponds to the use of long- and short-focus lenses. Punctuation such as the cut, fade and dissolve is as familiar on the sound track as in the image strip. All of the most widely used manipulations—both modal and segmental—are directly comparable between the two channels.[22]

At the cultural end of the range of similarities, both sound and image may be derived from profilmic or synthetic material. In the former case, the material used in either channel may be staged or unstaged, diegetic or

extradiegetic, subjective or objective in point of view/hearing.

With all of the foregoing parameters sound and image may vary independently, even in realistic narrative films: thus at any given moment the two channels will be perceptibly similar or dissimilar in at least one of many ways. For example, sound may be present while the image is absent (the screen is black) as at the end of LeRoy's *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang,* when Paul Muni fades into the darkness with the words "I steal"; the image may be present while sound is absent (the sound track is silent), as in Joseph Lewis's *The Big Combo* when Brian Donlevy's hearing aid is pulled out (a scene that also illustrates the combination of objective image and subjective sound); and of course, as more usually occurs, sound and image may be co-present.

Special relationships. Discussion of sound in films often concentrates on two special relationships between sound and image: the temporal link of *synchronization* and the spatial link of so-called "sound on" and "sound off," for which I prefer the unbiased terms *conjunction* and *disjunction.* However, these two relationships are ancillary to the points of comparison outlined above.

Although synchronized speech is usually treated as a separate category, the two special relationships obtain with all kinds of sound. Their main effect is to qualify the basic similarities and dissimilarities between sound and image. The weakest case is conjunction, which may be little more than the neutral bracketing of the two channels. The other three cases—disjunction, synchronization, and what may be called anti-synchronicity (the deliberate avoidance or disruption of sync)—can all add emphasis to either a similarity or a dissimilarity. The strength of the emphasis will depend on the context, varying inversely with the frequency or expectedness of the case. In *The Love Parade,* for example, the cutting of scenes in time with rhythmic noises is an infrequent use of sync that strongly emphasizes the temporal similarity of sound and image.

Sound and Image Together

Two important questions remain: what do the sound-image relations signify, and how does meaning emerge from their abundance?

The answers that follow are tentative, being based on a rudimentary structural system of interactions between the two channels. As simple as this system is, however, it does help to resolve many problems arising from the assumption of one dominant channel in the film.

Two caveats. First, the system is not meant to *replace* the perception of meaning in the individual channels: instead, it qualifies and supplements that meaning. Second, in order to test the general validity of the system, I cite examples ranging from commercial entertainments to serious political and experimental films. The fact that my focus is what these films have in common is not meant to deny their differences.

In each of the main group of relations (points of comparison) there are at any given moment two basic possibilities: sound and image may coincide or differ. The former case may be termed *confirmation;* the latter, *opposition.* Here are some examples of the basic paradigms:

Confirmation. In Bergman's *The Seventh Seal,* Max Von Sydow as the knight relaxes with Nils Poppe and Bibi Andersson in an impromptu picnic. Von Sydow refers to the mood of unexpected serenity by saying quietly, "I shall remember this moment. . . ." As he raises a bowl of milk to drink, reflections from its surface cause his face to literally light up. Both the sense and acoustic quality of the speech combine with the double reflection of the image in a vivid demonstration of the mood.

In Lester's *A Hard Day's Night,* the Beatles run down a fire escape to the accompaniment of "Can't Buy Me Love." The camera, placed below, rotates to follow the singers as they zigzag from flight to flight; at the same time, sunlight burns radiant diamond-shaped patterns in the openwork of the steps. As the song reaches the line "I'll buy you a diamond ring, my friend," the conjunction of the words "diamond" and "ring" with the diamond-shaped patterns and the circular movement of the image creates a sense of euphoric fitness.

At the end of Meszaros's *Diary for My Children,* set during the post-World War II

Stalinist era in Hungary, the young protagonist goes to visit her jailed mentor. They have to speak through two separate chain-link fences in an enclosed yard. Her last words are "You've turned gray"; after that the image freezes, enabling the viewer to take stock of the grayness of the scene, and then fades to a uniform gray. Aided by the additional segmentation of the image, the remark expands from a physical description of a man's hair to a metaphor for a whole society.[23]

In Ashby's *Being There,* Peter Sellers plays a gardener who has never known any life outside his wealthy employer's town house. Then the employer dies. As Sellers sits on the bed gazing at the corpse, there is a repeated disjunctive noise—the whining attempt to start an automobile engine. Although the sound serves a naturalistic purpose, its disjunction also imposes a relation with the silent focus of the image, Sellers confronting the corpse: subjectively, it suggests the wish that he could restart the vital functions of his employer; objectively, it foreshadows the difficulty he faces in making a fresh start in life.

Opposition. In *Citizen Kane,* there is a strong contrast of intensities when Welles as Kane dies: a big close-up of his mouth accompanies his almost whispered "Rosebud"—an opposition intensified by the obvious synchronization. The ending of Szabo's *Mephisto* reverses the contrast: Klaus Maria Brandauer, as the non-Nazi actor who has gone along with the Nazis in post-1933 Germany, is seen in long shot as a small spotlighted figure in a vast arena, while the deep voice of Rolf Hoppe (as a Nazi general whom the actor thought he could influence) booms at him over loudspeakers. Here, the opposition is intensified by its conformity to the physically active nature of sound and passive nature of the image. In each of these two examples, the unusual combination of sound and image draws attention to a pivotal development—a clue to Kane's character, the exposure of the actor's delusion.

A different pair of contrasts is found in Lang's *Fury.* At the trial of the lynch mob, silent newsreel footage is projected as evidence for the prosecution. The silence heightens the abnormality of the defendants' expressions of hate and glee as they set fire to the jail and sabotage attempts to save it. The presumed victim, Spencer Tracy, is alive but in hiding, bent on revenge. When his brothers and fiancée urge him to reveal the truth he yells, "I don't need other people!" and stalks out into the night. Then, feeling alone in the deserted streets, he enters a bar from which music is blaring—only to find it empty except for a bartender, who stands for a moment like a statue. Here, the combination of loud sound and virtually immobile image heightens the sense of aloneness.

Three points emerge from these examples. The first point concerns the role played by spoken (or sung) language in sound-image relations. In the examples from *The Seventh Seal, Citizen Kane* and *Mephisto,* the relation depends partly on the acoustic properties of speech: while the sense of what Von Sydow and Hoppe say contributes to the relation, the words they use could be paraphrased without causing any significant change. With *A Hard Day's Night* and *Diary for My Children,* however, the relation hinges on a precise choice of words. As far as sound-image relations are concerned, there is no essential difference between meaningful speech and any other kind of sound.

Second, it is clear that image-based analysis would by no means class all of the relations as paradigmatic, since they range in duration from a brief part of a scene (*Kane*) to two or more fairly lengthy scenes (both *Fury* examples, *Mephisto*). On the basis of sound-image relations, however, even the lengthiest examples remain unitary, for one of two different reasons. The dominant relation may simply be repeated, as in the *Fury* trial, *Mephisto* and also the single but lengthy scene in *Being There.* Alternatively, the relation may be founded on—and measured by—a continuous sound passage rather than an image scene, as in the *Fury* bar episode with its continuous blare of music. It is important to analyze a film on the basis of sound-image relations rather than by image segments alone.

The third point is that some of the foregoing examples involve additional sound-image relations. Thus *A Hard Day's Night* contains the more general confirmation of vigorous image movement and vigorous music;

the quiet background in *The Seventh Seal* matches the near-stillness of the image; and in *Diary for My Children,* the metronomic clack of a pacing guard's boots echoes the geometric division of the image space by chain-link fences. While each of these supplementary relations happens to support the dominant relation, the reverse is equally possible: thus in *Mephisto* there is an element of confirmation between Hoppe's loud voice and the size of his body in the foreground of the image. In view of the multiplicity of sound/image parameters, few synchronic relations are likely to be simple. How can such complex relations be assessed?

Provisionally, it seems that there is an additive effect (with counter-examples assigned a negative value). In other words, supplementary relations of the same sign increase the strength of the confirmation or opposition, while those of opposite sign weaken it. The total effect varies with the strength of the individual relations, especially the dominant one. In what follows, however, I distinguish only two levels of intensity for each basic relation —strong and weak. Strong implies that the dominant relation is intense and/or is supported by supplementary relations of the same sign, with few or no counter-examples. Weak implies that the dominant relation is nonintense and/or is supported by few or no relations of the same sign and/or is accompanied by one or more significant counter-examples.

There are also, of course, sound-image units in which the sum is close to zero, either because there is no marked confirmation/opposition or else because relations of both types are numerous. (An example of the former might be a long shot of an empty landscape accompanied by fairly bland music; of the latter, the segment near the opening of *Rear Window* in which the voice of James Stewart's editor is heard on the phone, together with diegetic sounds, while the camera roams around the room and the courtyard.) The meaning of such units depends largely on the context. In fact, even the strong units cannot be fully appraised in isolation but must be related to their syntagmatic organization.

Sound-image syntagmas. Since sound-image units can vary greatly in length, and since the segmentation of sound often does not coincide with that of the image, it may seem difficult to determine where one unit ends and another begins. In the *Seventh Seal* example, since the milk-drinking obviously does not coincide exactly with Von Sydow's words, and since he continues speaking for some time, where does the cited unit of strong confirmation yield to another, weakly confirmative unit?

As with the summing of individual units, precision seems unnecessary. In the foregoing example there is a continuing balance of confirmation with no signifcant change in sound or image. The relation established by one unit remains in force until the advent either of a different relation or of the same relation expressed with a marked difference. Determining just how many basic units there are in this higher-level segment is unimportant—at least at this stage.

Although the beginning or end of a traditional sequence may coincide with a significant change in sound-image relations, sequences based on the image alone can diverge so widely from those based on both channels together that I will refer to the latter as *passages.* A good example of the divergence between sequences and passages is provided by Conway's *Red Headed Woman,* a crypto-feminist film whose effectiveness is hard to account for in image-based terms. The film is a star vehicle for Jean Harlow, and since the outstanding element in her performance is her voice, it is easy to dismiss the direction of the image as tributary and inferior. Yet the interaction between sound and image organizes the apparently rambling plot into a strong chain of passages. At the beginning of the film, for example, Harlow attempts to seduce her boss Chester Morris and is frustrated by the return of his wife Leila Hyams. Harlow's unceremonious departure from Morris's house is followed by a close-up of her laughing. The combination of large image and loud laughter, the strongest confirmation in the film so far, proclaims the end of one passage and prepares the viewer/auditor for another. Later, after Morris and Hyams have divorced, Hyams visits him in hopes of a reconciliation only to find that he has just married Harlow: in a tony voice, Hyams delivers an intense wronged-woman speech and makes a proud exit, at which point Harlow regains control

by turning up the volume on her perky whine and uttering just three unexpected words: "That cheap thing!" Here it is a strong opposition that marks the end of the passage: the contrast between Harlow's words and tone of voice is reflected and reinforced by her petulant expression and arms-akimbo pose.

There can be interactions on a larger scale between different sound-image passages. The mood of serenity in the *Seventh Seal* interlude derives partly from its contrast with two preceding passages—the procession of flagellants and the attack on Nils Poppe at the inn. Both represent strong confirmation of high intensity: loud sound and continual image movement (plus, in the procession, a multiplicity of image elements). The euphoric scene in *A Hard Day's Night* stands out by contrast with a more static preceding passage, in the same way as traditional musicals intensify the strong confirmation of song plus dance by means of opposition or weak confirmation in the surrounding nonmusical passages.

Above the sound-image passage there does not usually seem to be any significant level of organization other than the *whole film*. Locating the boundaries of this structural unit causes few problems, of course. But the relation between the passage and the whole can be more elusive. It can be analyzed most easily in experimental films that have little or no narrative detail. Dwoskin's *Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet* consists of many repetitions of a single image scene (a man walking toward the camera) accompanied by a male voice singing the evangelical hymn of the title. After a while soft chords from a chamber orchestra enter behind the voice and become progressively fuller in sound as they continue from repetition to repetition. The passage shift from weak confirmation (fairly close image of man, fairly loud voice) to weak opposition (distant image, fairly loud voice) at the end of each repetition fades in importance beside the gradual shift in sound-image relations that extends through the whole film. Here the latter shift is easy to identify because the image is repeated. Otherwise, an analysis based primarily on the image might not go beyond the former.

Because sound and image share nearly all of the same parameters and manipulations they can take either side of any particular relation and, indeed, frequently exchange sides in a continuing or repeated relation. A case in point is the use of the voice-over narrator. Brian Henderson states[24] that in classical films such narrators are "jerked on and off stage in a manner that is quite undignified" and are "ludicrous stand-ins for the novelistic 'I,'" yet adds: "This is not to disparage the convention of the voice-over in cinema, which has figured in so many excellent films." Earlier Henderson hints at a resolution of this apparent contradiction: "Of course, voice-over narration in cinema does not comprise the whole text [as character narration can in literature]. . . . It is just one element among many elements, to be juggled along with them, often in shifting combinations." It is precisely as one sound element among the shifting combinations of sound and image that voice-over narration may be "jerked on and off stage" and yet form an integral part of the film.

Exchanges between the two channels affect not just voice-over narrations but all kinds of sounds (and images) as well. A sound-image relation may persist even though the individual parameters of the sound and the image change. For example, if lengthy images accompanied by brief sounds give way to brief images accompanied by lengthy sounds, there need be only a superficial change: the basic long/short opposition continues. This frequently occurs in Ozu's later films, where sequences involving characters consist of lengthy image scenes accompanied by rapid and/or brief passages of dialogue, while transition sequences consist of brief image scenes (streets, alleys, buildings, corridors, etc.) accompanied by continuous music. In this way Ozu achieves variety without disrupting the basic rhythm of his films.

The fact that sound-image syntagmas may have meaning over and above that of the individual relations is demonstrated by Naruse's *Meshi*. The film revolves around Setsuko Hara, a housewife who becomes aware of boredom after she and her husband, Ken Uehara, move from Tokyo to Osaka; she returns to Tokyo on her own, intending to take a job, but finally decides to stay with her husband. The first half of the film is accom-

panied by one of Fumio Hayasaka's typical westernized background scores, a vague, sentimental wash of music. Thus there is a continual weak opposition that happens to fit Hara's passive discontent. In the second half of the film, after Hara decides to leave for Tokyo, the music is often absent, and when it does occur it is more closely matched to the mood—a shift to a continual weak confirmation that gently underscores Hara's shift to action. *Meshi* demonstrates that even an insipid background score cannot be automatically condemned, as it usually is, for aesthetic or ideological shortcomings.

One obvious challenge to my proposed system is raised by films whose sound-image units are in such continual flux that no sustained or dominant relation emerges at higher levels. Yet this flux itself may constitute a dominant pattern—a series of contrasts that can be used to shock the filmgoer to either comic or serious effect. The Marx Brothers films offer examples of the former, with the brothers themselves displaying a wide range of sound-image relations: Groucho uttering wisecracks as he moves in his crouching lope, or rising to full height to launch a denunciation or a song; Chico's air of innocent reasonableness as he proposes ridiculous schemes in mangled English, or his cheerful piano playing with index finger pointed like a gun; Harpo's muteness accompanied with maniacal enthusiasm, lechery, misery or rage, at peace only when he plays the harp.

Both humor and seriousness emerge from the flux of such experimental films as Berliner's *Myth in the Electric Age* and *Natural History,* in which a loosely associated series of images is paired with independently chosen sounds. Some of the pairings are incongruous or ironic, such as a sawing noise with the image of a woodpecker or piano music synchronized with a man hammering, while others produce a strong confirmation, such as the dramatic jet roar that accompanies a time-lapse flow of mist down a mountain valley.

A serious application of sound-image flux is found in the early sound films of Vertov, *Enthusiasm* and *Three Songs About Lenin.* (*Enthusiasm* has the distinction of being the first film in which the sound-recordist is actually visible, just like Vertov's Man with the Movie Camera.) Both image and sound tend to be cut rapidly, though sometimes sounds continue through several image scenes and, less often, image scenes continue through several sound phrases. Frequent superimposed titles add complexity to the image, often changing or repeating in a separate rhythm of their own. A single held musical tone may accompany a crowd of workers (*Enthusiasm*) or the roar of an urban crowd may accompany a rural scene (*Lenin*). Images range from big close-ups to extreme long shots, and undergo such evident manipulations as freezing, time lapse and prismatic replication. The sound track includes synchronized speech, voice-over, disjunctive noises and various styles of music. Except for some anti-religious scenes near the beginning of *Enthusiasm,* the two films attempt no polemic—in fact, their mercurial sound-image relations could hardly sustain one. What they do offer is an impression of vigor and diversity that is meant to characterize the Soviet state.

The conspicuous role that sound plays in Vertov—as in such films as the Tavianis' *Padre, Padrone* and Godard's *First Name: Carmen*—is only one aspect of liberated Echo. Since my thesis is that sound deserves equal billing with the image even when its role is inconspicuous, I choose a more naturalistic film to make a final point.

Critical response to Wenders's *Paris, Texas* has differed most sharply over the peepshow palace episode, which is seen as either a high point or a letdown. Those in favor of the episode could invoke sound-image relations to support their view: an exchange of roles between the two channels enables the film to end both differently from and in balance with its beginning, since Harry Dean Stanton evolves from one sound-image opposition—mobile and mute—to its inverse—static and voluble. However, dissenting critics also could invoke sound-image relations: the peepshow episode does not actually end the film, and its dialogue, full of tardy exposition, lacks the driving intensity of Stanton's walking.

In short, the sound-image system I have outlined is not meant to provide easy answers. In more positive terms, this theoretical structure should not constrain discussion about

films or foreclose on critical options but, rather, open up new perspectives on the film.

NOTES

1. As one of many examples, Jurij Lotman, in *Semiotics of Cinema* (tr. Mark E. Suino, Michigan Slavic Contributions, Ann Arbor, 1976) begins by acknowledging the long history of film sound, but later asserts: "The pictorial language . . . is dominant. If we peel off the photographic level from a . . . complete film, we are doing much the same thing as a linguist who studies . . . speech activity in general. On a certain level this approach is not only possible, but even necessary."

2. "Cinema/Sound," Yale French Studies No. 60, 1980 (YFS).

3. "On the Soundtrack," *Screen* XXV 3, May-June 1984 (SST).

4. Elisabeth Weis, *The Silent Scream: Alfred Hitchcock's Sound Track*. London & Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1982.

5. See for example Harry M. Geduld, *The Birth of the Talkies*. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1975.

6. Béla Belázs, *Theory of the Film*. New York: Dover, 1970.

7. Jean Mitry, *Esthétique et Psychologie du Cinéma*, Vol. 2. Paris: Editions Universitaires, 1965.

8. F. E. Sparshott, "Basic Film Aesthetics," *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, April 1971: cited in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, ed. Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen. New York: Oxford, 1974.

9. Raymond Bellour, "Segmenting/Analysing," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, I, 3, August 1976; published in a new translation by Diana Matias in *Genre: The Musical*, ed. Rick Altman. London/Boston/Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981.

10. Claudia Gorbman, "Narrative Film Music," YFS.

11. Daniel Percheron, "Sound in Cinema and Its Relation to Image and Diegesis," *Ça/Cinéma* No. 2, October 1973, reprinted in YFS.

12. Christian Metz, "Aural Objects," from "Le Perçu et le Nommé," in *Pour une esthétique sans entrave—Mélanges Mikel Dufrenne*. Paris: Editions 10/18, 1975, reprinted in YFS.

13. Rick Altman, "Moving Lips: Cinema As Ventriloquism," YFS.

14. *Fundamentals of Sensory Physiology*, ed. Robert F. Schmidt. New York/Heidelberg/Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1978.

15. Ralph Stephenson and Jean R. Debrix, *The Cinema As Art*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965.

16. Stephen Heath, "Narrative Space," in *Questions of Cinema*, Bloomington: Indiana University, 1981.

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20. Sound and image can of course be *made* to interfere with each other. In Fassbinder's *In a Year of Thirteen Moons* many auditors are probably distracted from Volker Spengler's reminiscences in a slaughterhouse by the sight of mechanized steer-killing in the background. More often the two channels interact synergistically. In Larry Gottheim's *Mouches Volantes*, which permutes a set of visual sequences alternately with silence and with an unrelated conversation, each sequence with sound acquires a greater apparent spatial depth than its silent counterpart.

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Reviews

STOP MAKING SENSE

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With astonishing swiftness, the rock 'n' roll documentary—the "rockumentary," if you will—developed a routine as predictable as the B western. D. A. Pennebaker's epochal *Don't Look Back* (1967) and *Monterey Pop* (1968) are the obvious prototypes, their makeshift mix of concert sequences, *cinéma vérité* backstage passages, and color commentary by semi-articulate scene-makers inspiring virtual xeroxes from enterprising film-maker/groupies desperate for screen subject matter. Early on, the form attained a creative summit with the yin/yang dialectics of *Woodstock* (1970) and *Gimme Shelter* (1971), but from there it was mostly downhill. Throughout the next decade, bands from Abba to Zappa put their acts on celluloid in what had become a cinematic analog to vanity publishing: Alice Cooper's *Welcome to My Nightmare*, AC/DC's *Let There Be Rock*, Blue Oyster Cult and Black Sabbath's *Black and Blue*, or Paul McCartney's *Rockshow*. Well before the Roll-

films or foreclose on critical options but, rather, open up new perspectives on the film.

NOTES

1. As one of many examples, Jurij Lotman, in *Semiotics of Cinema* (tr. Mark E. Suino, Michigan Slavic Contributions, Ann Arbor, 1976) begins by acknowledging the long history of film sound, but later asserts: "The pictorial language . . . is dominant. If we peel off the photographic level from a . . . complete film, we are doing much the same thing as a linguist who studies . . . speech activity in general. On a certain level this approach is not only possible, but even necessary."

2. "Cinema/Sound," Yale French Studies No. 60, 1980 (YFS).

3. "On the Soundtrack," *Screen* XXV 3, May-June 1984 (SST).

4. Elisabeth Weis, *The Silent Scream: Alfred Hitchcock's Sound Track*. London & Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1982.

5. See for example Harry M. Geduld, *The Birth of the Talkies*. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1975.

6. Béla Belázs, *Theory of the Film*. New York: Dover, 1970.

7. Jean Mitry, *Esthétique et Psychologie du Cinéma*, Vol. 2. Paris: Editions Universitaires, 1965.

8. F. E. Sparshott, "Basic Film Aesthetics," *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, April 1971: cited in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, ed. Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen. New York: Oxford, 1974.

9. Raymond Bellour, "Segmenting/Analysing," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, I, 3, August 1976; published in a new translation by Diana Matias in *Genre: The Musical*, ed. Rick Altman. London/Boston/Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981.

10. Claudia Gorbman, "Narrative Film Music," YFS.

11. Daniel Percheron, "Sound in Cinema and Its Relation to Image and Diegesis," *Ça/Cinéma* No. 2, October 1973, reprinted in YFS.

12. Christian Metz, "Aural Objects," from "Le Perçu et le Nommé," in *Pour une esthétique sans entrave—Mélanges Mikel Dufrenne*. Paris: Editions 10/18, 1975, reprinted in YFS.

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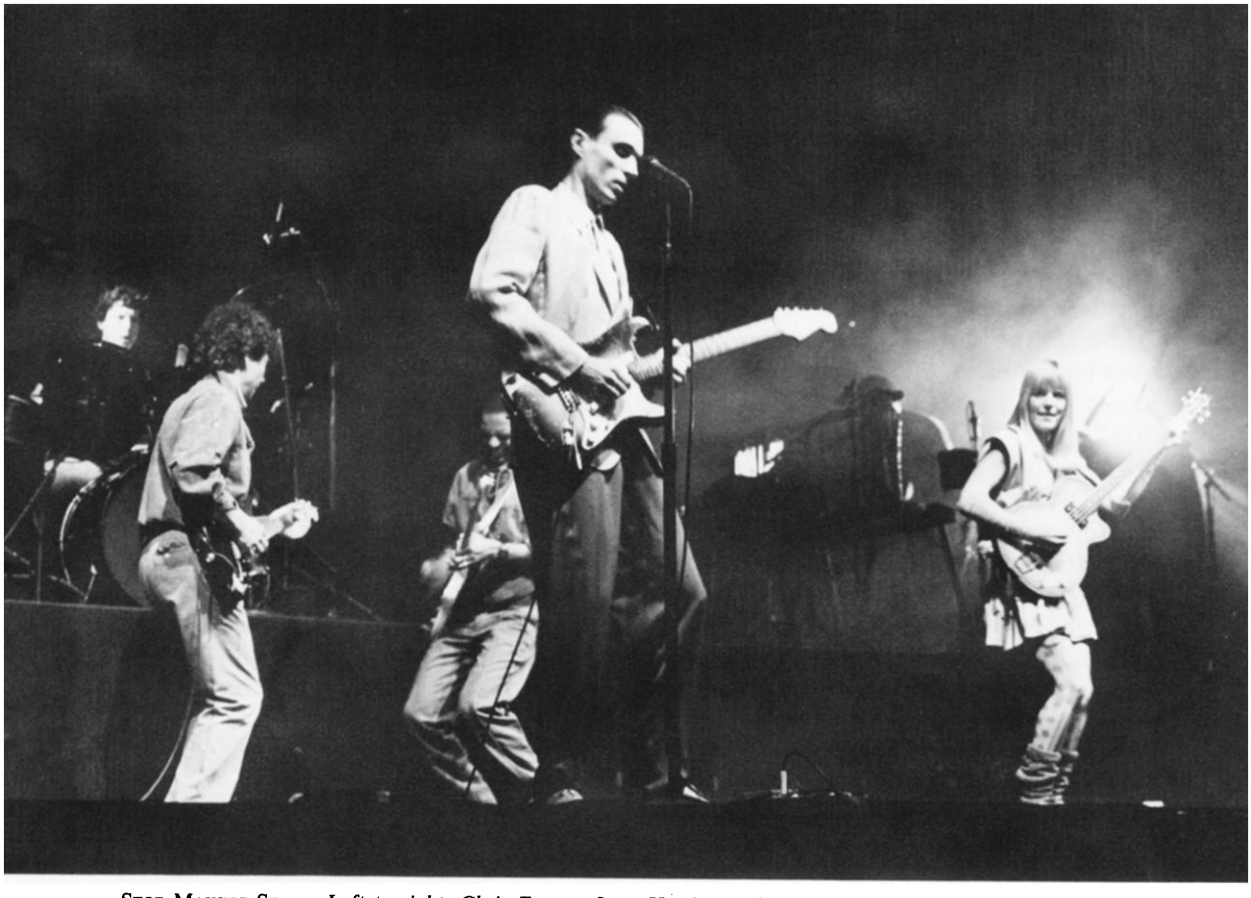


STOP MAKING SENSE. *Left to right: Chris Frantz, Jerry Harrison, Alex Weir, David Byrne, and Tina Weymouth.*

ing Stones lumbered forward with *Let's Spend the Night Together* (1983), the rock concert film looked as atrophied as the dinosaur talent it presented.

Rob Reiner's *This Is Spinal Tap* (1984) put the final nail in the generic coffin. An hilarious send-up of rock-doc conventions and pretentions, it was a lovingly crafted hatchet job of such convincing authenticity that preview audiences reportedly swallowed the scam whole. In tracking what could be the last American tour of an aging troupe of heavy metal kids, *Spinal Tap*'s ingratiating documentarian/narrator Marty DiBergi (Reiner) treats his subject with the kind of earnestness the BBC usually reserves for the Battle of Stalingrad. Like Woody Allen in *Zelig,* Reiner fabricates archival footage with an almost eerie sense of period detail (he has Summer of Love TV psychedelia down cold) and his conceptual co-conspirators (Christopher Guest, Michael McKean, and Harry Shearer) impersonate the endearingly dense Limey rockers without (literally) missing a beat. However, their note-for-note assaults on fatuous rock music (sample lyric from "Big Bottom": "My baby fits me like a flesh tuxedo/I'd love to sink her with my pink torpedo") are less ferocious than the trashing given the "rockumentary" form itself. In the end, the salvific power of rock 'n' roll is rather touchingly asserted; it's the genre that's tapped out.

Concurrent with the rock-doc's apparent demise was the ascent of the small-screen music promotion clip that consummated the long-pending marriage between rock 'n' roll and television. MTV, of course, rode the rock video wave to cable solvency and despotic sway over the record industry through a nonstop, saturation dissemination of three-minute vignettes depicting the filial sympathies of Twisted Sister, the defiant feminism of Madonna, and the social conscience of Billy Idol. For the (ostensibly) narrative film with a rock sound track, the commercial rewards of the trans-media tie-in are irresistible; motion picture production and marketing strategies have adapted accordingly, *viz. Flashdance, Footloose,* or *Purple Rain.* At the same time, MTV's seemingly bottomless cache of clips offers so

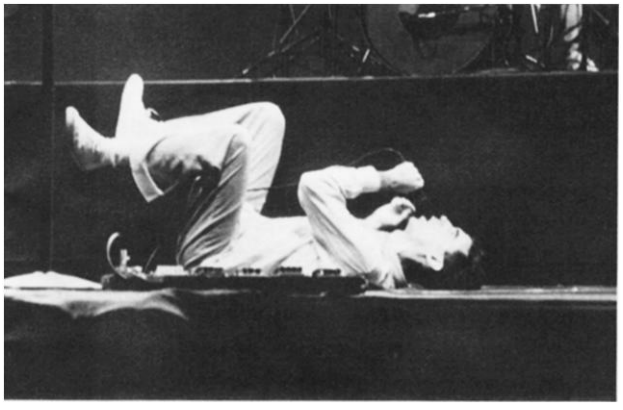
many variations on the three basic video music themes (fairly straightforward, lip-synched performances, medium-priced two-set stories, and elaborate, interpretative "concept" pieces) that a theatrical concert film is hard-pressed to maintain its commercial, let alone artistic, viability. Within the movie industry, after all, investor faith in concert films has never been high and, as the saying goes, "How many ways can you shoot a lead riff?"

Answering that and other musical questions is the Talking Heads' *Stop Making Sense,* the *My Dinner with André* of rock documentaries. Cinematic style (director Jonathan Demme) defers to theatrical content (head Head David Byrne) in this deceptively modest record of the band's dazzling 1983 stage show. "Presented" (without a trace of irony) by MTV and profiting mightily from its relentless promotion, *Stop Making Sense* revitalizes a dormant genre with the conservative prescription of a good product plainly packaged. For Demme, the playing's the thing; this party's simple. No crowd atmospherics, background filler, or filmic pyrotechnics deflect attention from the musical performance. Assuming an unobtrusive, best-seat-in-the-house vantage, he presents the Talking Heads at face value, cut to essentials in a very full 88-minute set. Demme's directorial technique is so sparse and free of auteurist assertion that the New York Film Critics Circle refused to deem the effort a true documentary. (That'll teach him to showcase the talent.) To be sure, the creative contribution of multi-hyphenate artist David Byrne is everywhere (design, lighting, sound, etc.), but whatever the correct categorization or accreditation, this is a rapturously entertaining musical feature because, above all, the Heads give great concert.

Graduates of the mid-70s CBGB's/Max's School of American Punk, the Talking Heads (guitarist/vocalist/songwriter Byrne, bassist Tina Weymouth, guitarist/keyboardist Jerry Harrison, and drummer Chris Frantz) always stood out in class, but only after the albums *Remain in Light* (1980) and *Speaking in Tongues* (1983) did their commercial showing fulfill the promise of their critical stock. Welding avant-garde aspirations to Top Forty accessibility, the Heads' audacious musical and theatrical ventures (mainly in the direction of Africa and Japan, respectively) are studied yet heartfelt, intellectually challenging yet eminently danceable. Lately, the mind/body split has tilted increasingly towards rhythm (stop making sense) over rationality (talking heads), just as Byrne's stage persona has blossomed from near-catatonic stiffness to dancing tomfoolery. With the addition of Alex Weir (guitar), Bernie Worrell (keyboards), Steve Scales (percussion), and Edna Holt and Lynn Mabry (backing vocals), the band's membership has expanded to suit its new sensibilities.

Commanding center stage is Byrne, the group's front man and the film's star. With his sunken eyes, skin wrapped tight around cadaverous skull, lanky physique, and law student élan, he is an unlikely rock god, a fragile, ascetic figure who also has something of the serial killer about him. Merely by slicking back his hair or donning a pair of black-framed glasses, he can look more alien than Ziggy Stardust. Byrne's trademark body language—ostrich-like head movements, herky-jerky shoulders, free-floating limbs, and pliable visage—seems to defy the laws of gravity and anatomy with the same disdain. Acting out each song as a distinct mini-drama, he brings an amazing emergy, exuberance, and range of expression to a repertoire replete with show-stoppers. Declaiming the evangelic cadences from the signature tune "Once in a Lifetime" ("You may find yourself/In a beautiful house/With a beautiful wife/And you may ask yourself/Well, how did I get here?"), he is entranced and entrancing, a pained visionary striking palm to forehead in futile realization ("same as it ever was"). Elsewhere, he is by turns paranoiac ("Psycho Killer"), wistful ("Heaven"), funky ("Swamp"), ecstatic ("Life After Wartime"), and serene ("Naive Melody [This Must Be the Place]"). Always, his incarnations are gripping theater.

Lyrically, the Talking Heads' chief songwriter is often drawn to the dark and dejected, but even the bleakest of Byrnian visions (imagine: life without headphones in a post-nuke universe) is enlightened by the band's sheer joy in performance. Their community of musical interest and the pleasing spectacle of racial/sexual cooperation invest the show



David Byrne of the Talking Heads.

with a warm, familial feeling that, artsy bows to theatrical distanciation notwithstanding, bridges the gap between beholder and beheld. The concert opens with Byrne walking onstage alone, armed only with guitar and cassette player. "I've got a tape I want to play," he says, and launches into "Psycho Killer" with the tape blaring a prerecorded accompaniment. As the road crew obtrusively sets up equipment, each successive song adds more personnel, first bass ("Heaven"), next drums ("Thank You for Sending Me an Angel"), then guitar ("Found a Job"), until the band functions at full force for "Slippery People," a real rave-up. The change is gradual and the point obvious, but the pay-off is electrifying when the whole becomes greater than the parts.

Favoring medium and long shots that frame the players in partnership, Demme visually affirms the cozy unity. On "Naive Melody," a lovely ode to domestic romance, a side view from the wings catches the performers upfront swaying softly together in time; the screen-length portrait that opens "Life After Wartime" shows them jogging in place, a team of athletes ready to take the field. For anyone who knows the Talking Heads only through their records, the vigor, playfulness, and sense of humor that animate their live show is a revelation. Steve Scales showboats buoyantly, the Tom Tom Club (a Heads offshoot piloted by Frantz and Weymouth) waltzes through a strobe light nod to psychedelia, a slide show projects randomly appropriate words and images backscreen, and Byrne does the hip shake thing in his outlandish, oversized "Big Suit." Byrne's byplay with back-up singers Holt and Mabry, a matched set whose black beauty and cascading choreography regularly upstages the lead vocalist, makes for some especially felicitous footage. Whether jockeying for position at the microphone on "What a Day That Was" or gleefully facing off to mime a guitar showdown, they must be having fun.

Naturally, many of Demme's directorial decisions are dictated by the nature of the Talking Heads' stage show; he has little choice but to follow the follow spot. In the film's production notes, he acknowledges that their act was "an incredibly cinematic show" to begin with, and that the movie version is but "the way to see it to best advantage." Working with Byrne, himself a director of the evocative music videos for "Once in a Lifetime" and "Burning Down the House," Demme settled on a screen strategy that kept faith with the theatricality of the original production. Only in the lighting design does the filmed record unquestionably surpass the live show. For the actual filming, the band did four consecutive dates at the Pantages Theatre in Hollywood; staying with the one venue permitted the lighting design a greater precision, complexity, and artistry than would have been possible on the road. Besides its visual delights, the gorgeous chiaroscuro bathing the band (captured in rich black, white, and red textures by cinematographer Jordan Cronenweth) accentuates the lyrical mood, as in the changing shadow play for the "Swamp"/"What a Day That Was"/"Naive Melody" sequence. Although each show was covered by eight cameras (six locked in, one hand-held, and one Panaglide), Demme relies extensively on straight-ahead long takes, shunning the amphetamine editing pace of the TV rock video. Cinematic counterpoints to the music are rare: a few fast reverse angles to complement Byrne's backward reeling during "Psycho Killer:" a knowing insert of Chris Frantz when Tina Weymouth sings of her "lucky boyfriend." The opening follow shot of Byrne's white sneakers approaching the stage and several quick views of the crowd when the lights come up at the show's finale are about as intrusive as the man behind the camera gets. Finally, the sound is superb, more than state of the art: 24 tracks recorded digitally for film, for the first time in movie history.

Evading rock-doc cliches and rock-vid encroachments with equal agility, *Stop Making Sense* is as good a concert film as has ever been made. Picking the right band always helps, of course; so does having the sense to stop making cinemah and let it play. Demme's restraint and care may not be flashy, but for the job of work at hand it is splendidly effective. It can also be surprisingly innovative: in a medium shot from stage right, Jerry Harrison, foreground, is cooking away on "Found a Job" in what looks like a fresh, new way to shoot a lead riff. —THOMAS DOHERTY

THE COTTON CLUB

Director: Francis Coppola. Screenplay: William Kennedy and Francis Coppola, based on a story by Mario Puzo. Producer: Robert Evans. Decor: Richard Sylbert. Photography: Stephen Goldblatt. Orion.

Let there be no more mourning at the bar about Francis Coppola's latest film, *The Cotton Club*. This particular director, whose recent works have shown a determined effort to move away from the subject-matter of his most successful films (*The Godfather,* Parts I and II), has already suffered enough critical slings and arrows. The horrific details of preparation and production of *The Cotton Club* were revealed last summer in *New York* magazine, so that one approached the finished product with high expectations and suspended apprehension. As it turns out, *The Cotton Club* is not what one hoped for—a tribute to black entertainers who recreated and transformed the traditions of vaudeville into an individualistic, sophisticated lyricism. Instead, submerged in the atmosphere of the "Roaring Twenties," white gangsters rub shoulders with white patrons from downtown Manhattan, all caught-up in a dusky Prohibition haze of glamor.

The very words of the title carry within them the mythic aspects of a dream of Harlem-past; even in the memories of those performers who actually worked in the Cotton Club, the place is marked by the privations of the Depression (which lasted longer for blacks than for the white population) and the sociological explosions of its successive decades. Perhaps all of these things were a part of producer Robert Evans's original "vision," as he has described his initial attraction to the story of Harlem's most famous nightclub. But the thoroughgoing gangster film that one sees here is of interest *only* as an experimental contribution to that genre because all of the musical performers are secondary, no matter how often they attempt to surmount the conventional violence around them.

The true drama of a film called *The Cotton Club* should lie in the indomitability of segregated black artists who were able to lose themselves in ecstasies of escapist jazz song and dance. For a time, they were able to enjoy an era of prosperity, but after 1929, their grim struggle to survive was an ironic contrast to the glitter and artifice of their costumes and stage grins. One can sense the dilemma facing Robert Evans, but then there is always that apprehensiveness among Hollywood producers about "black films" that would cause him to seek a *bankable* realization of his vision. The compromise screenplay that William Kennedy and Francis Coppola have created is a strange mélange of gangster traditions and occasional bursts of lyric behavior; the former often obscures the latter so that there are moments when the spectator tries to look through and beyond the heads and shoulders of conversing actors to see the dancers in the background. The spectre of Mario Puzo (given original story credit along with Kennedy and Coppola) haunts the film whenever blood splatters and machine guns roar. *The Cotton Club* is quite cinematic—the production design of Richard Sylbert has evoked a Harlem night club that would have made Carl Van Vechten shout hurrahs because the orange-lit, Art-deco environment conveys an aesthete's view of a place that never quite existed. But the *real* Cotton Club's glamor was in the show, not in the club's decor. The club's excitements were in the illicit liquor and the extraordinary mixture of clientele—that shudderingly exciting sense of forbidden adventure when high and lower classes competed for the sexual revelations of the Negro-as-exotique.

The spell of that sort of environment is attempted from the beginning of the film—the mournful horns and steady, rhythmic beat of the music add to the illuminating images of befeathered, mulatto chorus girls moving with

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Linette McKee as the "tragic mulatto" singer in THE COTTON CLUB.

feline languor across a nightclub stage, but there is some initial confusion about *where* all of this takes place. Then the Club Bamville is identified, and the gangster Dutch Schultz (*né* Arthur Flegenheimer, and played with wet-lipped desperation by James Remar) appears, consorting with an interracial clientele. Thus the actual locale of the Cotton Club is not seen until later, after the introduction of a sexual affair between a jazz cornetist, Dixie Dwyer (Richard Gere) and Vera Cicero, Schultz's mistress (Diane Lane): Sylbert and cinematographer Stephen Goldblatt eventually impress the spectator with Coppola's stylish observations of aggressive eroticism in the two major love scenes. The sets and lighting embellish the figures of Dixie and Vera, from the flash of bare limbs as Vera falls to a silken bed, to the textured reflection of lace curtains against bare skin as the two make love, with multi-colored rain shadows flickering on their faces. Unfortunately, throughout the film, the dialogue is explicit and often intrusive, especially when the film turns away from the activities in the nightclub sequences. The black characters occupy a subplot about a tap dancer, Sandman Williams (Gregory Hines), who is hired by the Cotton Club and falls in love with one of the chorus girls, Lila (Lonette McKee). Neither one of them is developed fully: Sandman's ambition causes him to leave his brother, also a dancer, and go on to success as a solo performer. Lila soon becomes the stereotyped "tragic mulatto," feeling guilty because she has "passed" for white in order to further her singing career. It is very difficult to care about either the black or white pair of lovers because their motivations, feelings and overall humanity are all too grey and predictable. The efforts to bring in racial prejudices against blacks are handled crudely: one knows that eventually the bullying white backstage manager of the Cotton Club, who castigates and assaults the entertainers at his whim, will be beaten up in some racial turn of events. When an anticipatedly bigoted hotel desk clerk tries to refuse entry to Sandman and Lila, the impasse is resolved

by Lila's declaration of mixed background. However, in those times, the couple would *still* be refused. Besides, mixed couples of the day would know of certain Harlem hotels that were popular with entertainers, like the Hotel Theresa, which offered very little resistance in such matters. Nevertheless, it is also around Sandman and Lila that the most promising excitements of *The Cotton Club* revolve. The audience, prepared, expectant, feels its temperaments kindled in three key sequences: (1) a Harlem kitchen, where Sandman attempts to teach his younger sister (Wynonna Smith) the time-step, and his mother (Thelma Carpenter) breaks into song. In this lyrical prelude to a complete number the intimacy is perfect, and in true musical-film tradition, the scene could have been as simple and charming as the seemingly impromptu "Sing Before Breakfast" interlude in *Broadway Melody of 1936.* Alas, it ends too abruptly. (2) In an evocation of the famous Hoofers Club, the long-vanished Harlem hangout for tap dancers, Sandman engages in what develops into a challenge-dance between himself and such brilliant black performers as Honi Coles, "Sandman" Sims, "Buster" Brown, Tip, Tap, and Toe, Henry Le Tang, Bubba Gaines, etc. If ever there was a moment for musical film history, this was it. Suddenly, Goldblatt's camera destroys the exuberance by moving to *close-ups* (!), to *reaction* shots (!) and to the *shoes* of the dancers, while the performers are dancing! The lessons learned over the years about filmed dance, from *Top Hat* to *Funny Face*—keep the dancers in full frame—are all discarded, and the dynamic competition between the hoofers is diminished in the audience's eyes. Suddenly, the scene is over and it is at this point that one feels a sense of discontentment moving through the audience, a premonition of unfulfilled expectations about *The Cotton Club* as a musical. (3) There are two wonderful montages that indicate an imaginative approach to the film's mixture of lyricism and violence. Both of them occur *during* musical numbers; first, when Lila sings Harold Allen's "Ill Wind." The camera moves with her breeze-blown figure as dancers swirl lengths of white material behind her, and superimposed upon these images are the machine-gun encounters of white and black gangsters on the nocturnal streets of Harlem. Near the end of the film, Sandman's declaration of stardom, as well as his acceptance by Lila, is symbolized by a rapid, solo tap dance. His performance is cross-cut with the assassination of Dutch Schultz and in many ways, these particular moments, underscored by a mordant thread of music, sum up the film's intentions—the feeling that a coexistence of human love surmounted the barbaric destruction of individual lives according to the arbitrary declines and falls of gangster regimes. Sandman's life-death dance is stunning cinema. (If it is possible to correctly interpret the lengthy credits of *The Cotton Club,* both of these montages were directed by Gian-Carlo Coppola—Francis's eldest son—and photographed by Donald Sweeney.)

Finally, a few words about the performances. Richard Gere struggles with the role of Dixie, but is miscast as a combined Valentino-George Raft figure. He is too much of a contemporary image, and makes little effort to embrace the sound and manners of another time. Fortunately, he is involved in one of the film's most satiric moments where, with Vera, he performs a violent apache-tango, and the other nightclub-guests assume that it is a new dance-fad, imitating the couple's slaps and shoves. Diane Lane is reduced to becoming an exemplar of Art-deco femininity, sometimes a Louise Brooksian doxy, at other times, a blonde baby-faced version of Texas Guinan. Like Gere, she suffers from contemporaneity (someone should have shown her some Alice White films), so that Vera becomes an elusive character, beautiful to see but vaguely defined. The gangsters dominate the center of *The Cotton Club.* Bob Hoskins's menacing features and compelling personality endow the role of Owney Madden with unforgettable conviction. His moments of reunion with his prognathous henchman, Frenchy (Fred Gwynne) encompass, very effectively, the humane side of gangster loyalties, and here, one cannot help but respond with reflective laughter. The most complete portrayal among the underworld characters is that of Nicolas Cage as Dixie's younger brother, Vincent, who becomes a Dutch Schultz henchman, until his boss's contemptuous attitudes drive Vincent to rebellion and death. The character

is loosely based upon the career of Vincent "Mad Dog" Coll, including a recreation of an infamous incident during which Coll accicentally caused some children to be slain in a gangland crossfire. Somehow, Cage does convince as a Depression youth and transforms himself in style and physical presentation as a descendant of the American cinema's image of wayward delinquents: the loose cap and pugnacious visage evoke the early thirties world of *Public Enemy* and *Scarface,* and Cage's frustrated volatility of temperament links him to remembrances of the Sonny character in *The Godfather,* Part I. Once the scriptwriters decided to remold social history and make *The Cotton Club* a gangster film instead of a musical drama, the gangsters merge as prototypes of those special images of villainy associated with the cinema's criminal underworlds. One is struck by the continual closeups of gangster faces, either in the orange-glow of well-lit rooms or in sinister half-shadows. If the sound was eliminated, the visual images of the gangsters have the dramatic power of a Pudovkin film, and at one point, James Remar steps out of a car and backs away into the dark, whispering admonitions to Dixie—an homage to Mervyn Leroy's *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang.* (It is suspected that the real Dutch Schultz was not quite as much of an animal as he is in *The Cotton Club,* but Remar's snarling creature brings terror into the film, especially with his sudden attack upon a rival by plunging a carving fork into the throat, whereupon the splattered blood drips from a chandelier upon Vera's powdered cheek.) Julian Beck's bony face becomes a mask of gimlet-eyed evil, and he is a memorable addition to Coppola's gallery of implacable assassins. In a thankless role as Dutch Schultz's neglected wife, Lisa Jane Persky is droll and laconic, at one point spearing black olives on each manicured finger and eating them: the bored mobster's moll, elegant but ignored. Ironically, Joe D'Alessandro appears as the youthful (but deadly) Lucky Luciano; his face continues to do the acting for him and somehow it seems cinematically proper that his career should move from Warhol's underground to Coppola's stylized underworld. Except for Gregory Hines, all of the black talents are wasted because basically *The Cotton Club* is not about them at all. Lonette McKee, one hopes, will eventually find her proper niche in musicals (if these are ever really made again), and it would be interesting to know exactly what choreographers George Faison and Arthur Mitchell contributed to the film. Larry Marshall does a passable imitation of Cab Calloway, reminding one of the still great original, and there are *glimpses* of veteran black actors Robert Earl Jones as a stage doorman and Woody Strode as the Cotton Club's front doorman. Among the black chorus line, there are several great names from the New York dance world including Lydia Abarca and Sarita Allen, and from what we glimpse of them, their taps and twirls look fine, indeed. Harlem as a milieu is far, far away, although it was a thrill to see the old Lafayette Theater marquee aglow once more. *The Cotton Club* as a film is never boring; it only has the wrong title. It is a film that pulls in two directions, and whenever the confrontations between gangsters take over, the sounds of jazz and dancers echo insistently for attention. The film will always remain a fascinating, enigmatic experiment, and in the persevering career of Francis Coppola, *The Cotton Club* illustrates, perhaps, the philosophic statement uttered by the gangsters at the conclusion of it all: "We learn as we go."

—ALBERT JOHNSON

CAN SHE BAKE A CHERRY PIE?

Written and directed by Henry Jaglom. Photography: Bob Fiore. Producer: M. H. Simonson. Music: Karen Black. International Rainbow Pictures, 933 N. LaBrea, Los Angeles CA 90038.

Much of *Can She Bake a Cherry Pie?* plays like a beguilingly homely sort of romantic comedy. But in a somewhat goofy seduction scene near the end, the chief female character (Zee, played by Karen Black) suddenly addresses the camera straight-on. And that strangely liberating moment of visual self-reference has retroactive repercussions which are peculiarly richening for the film as a whole and which confirm, by delayed effect, a set of complexities which had seemed tentative until that moment.

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The story has a couple of Greenwich Village

denizens, Black's Zee and Michael Emil's Eli, fall for each other in the wake of their respective marital misadventures. What emerges is only partly a funky love story and only partly a comedy of manners set among unmistakably "modern" relationships. Zee is an aspiring jazz singer; Eli is some kind of small business executive. Both have a charming, vaguely neurotic loose-endedness about them, and at the outset, the film cross cuts back and forth between them: he natters away with a divorced pal; she wanders about, dazed by her husband's abrupt departure from her life. Soon, in the first of the film's beguilingly sudden twists, their paths cross at a sidewalk café (one of the film's primary settings), and their unlikely-seeming relationship begins amid the sorts of emotional leaps and hesitations which give the film's psychology a kind of free-associational freshness. Sprightly flurries of odd-couple romance ensue, with two people—simultaneously vulnerable and available—making not-entirely-comical progress toward each other while fleshing out an almost-documentary-style double portrait. And there are complications by way of a young-man-on-the-make, an actor (Michael Margotta) who does a little street entertainment number with a trained pigeon. The actor's wandering eye and other involvements help create a crisis for Eli-Zee and entangle Eli briefly with the actor's sullenly patient companion (Frances Fisher).

There's a feisty brilliance to Black's work here, especially in the way she plays against the idea of the movie star as item for visual consumption while also putting over what may be the most satisfying performance of her career. She sits and sprawls and walks with a casual abandon that quietly by-passes the body language of Hollywood glamor and calendar-girl sexuality, and she maintains that off-hand domestic realism in her costumes and general disinterest in cosmetcs. And the stocky, balding Emil is plainly cast against the stock image of the screen lover as well, but his characterization is no exercise in the sort of self-glorifying romanticism enacted by Woody Allen in his *Play It Again Sam* phase. Likewise, the love scenes themselves have a lumpy banality which seems to heighten, rather than limit, their conviction: Emil and Black straightforwardly evoke a couple too immersed in emotion to be concerned about how their lovemaking *looks*. All of this derives from a documentary-like modesty which evokes the sorts of beauty and vitality that throw stereotypes for a loop. Jaglom's observant approach to everyday realities—the look of a freshly washed face, for example—permit the zesty, intimate recognitions that the dramatic spotlighting of a more conventional film would smother or miss altogether.

The behaviorial elements of the film's comedy extend into its recurring play with domestic applications of personal perspectives and the "logic" that goes with them. The Emil character's shaggy-dog proclivity for pedantically reasoned attitudes on diet, emotional outlook, and sexual practices is integral to his charm. And the Black character, for whom spontaneous variability is an article of faith, rags him affectionately about being overly "mental" and inattentive to sensuous experience. But Eli's inclinations tend so much toward intelligent cultivation of domestic pleasures and daily health that his rational excesses become part of a gentle travesty of the work-oriented, unemotional American male of pop sociology. Likewise, when the two of them indulge in a brief Sunday morning bedroom seminar on gender differences, the platitudes they bandy about serve chiefly to highlight the characters' freedom from such pigeon-holing—even as the evidence of *their* differences accumulates.

The film's "openness"—to its characters' quirks and to the quirky flow of events around them—is part of the pleasure here, and so is the way in which Jaglom uses a smart, unpretentious mixture of montage and long takes to give *Can She Bake a Cherry Pie?* unexpected dimensions. The characters' crises and entanglements provoke a stunningly casual climax in which several strands of the film are drawn unexpectedly together—and then cheerfully set aside as the central relationship goes on to whatever comes next. And home movies (from Jaglom's parents) and footage of Orson Welles in Jaglom's *A Safe Place* (which Zee watches on TV) add surprising dimensions to the film, with the optically slowed-down home movies making a particularly gracious and graceful contribution. An excerpt from Vincente Minelli's *The Bandwagon* gives the film

Karen Black as Zee and Michael Emil as Eli in CAN SHE BAKE A CHERRY PIE?

a fourth footage source, and its music track is similarly diverse and allusive: the symphonic "Scheherazade," Fred Astaire's big-band-era rendition of "The Way You Look Tonight," Black's jazzy renditions of a few of her own songs, and a makeshift street band's twangy version of the traditional song, "Can She Bake a Cherry Pie?"

The initial cross-cutting between Eli and Zee, in the early sequence that both precedes and brings about the crossing of their paths, is echoed in the late sequence in which their respective dalliances with other partners temporarily separate them in ways that will bring them back together more definitively. These implicit paradoxes of joining and separation function as refusals of the "sutures" in conventional cinema, at the same time that they further complicate the film's literal and emotional spaces—though in a characteristically off-handed way. In the sequence where we first see the Margotta character with his trained pigeon, their performance in the street is intercut with images of Black at a sidewalk café. It is never clear that she is watching the performance, or that the performance is for her benefit, or that the café and sidewalk even adjoin the street in which the spontaneous-looking performance is taking place. These spatial and temporal uncertainties cast chronology into doubt as well, but their scrambling of cinematic codes which signal nearness and distance contribute to the movie's self-reflexive concern with seeing, with being seen, and with the unseen (or not being seen).

Later in the film, we learn that the Margotta character has been spying on Zee, and from fairly early on in her relationship with Eli, Zee has an unconfirmable sense that someone is following (and watching) them in the crowded streets. These details converge not only with the parallels and disjunctions of the cross-cutting, but also with an explicit concern with the seen and the unseen. Zee intuits a gaze which she is at first unable to return, but she also offers Eli an impromptu street corner lecture on the elusive beauties which she, but not he, sees around them. Part of the irony here is that the camera does not seem to "see" these beauties either, even as it records her act of pointing them out—just as it "fails" to find the unseen watcher, even as Jaglom

cuts away to shots of the areas toward which Zee is ostensibly pointing. The imposed "natural" correspondences of "sutured" gazes is pointedly undercut here too, with results that restore to the selective clarity of cinematic seeing some of the indeterminacy of everyday, extracinematic seeing. And insofar as the film confirms the reality of sights which are at once seen and unseen in the movie, it is again pushing its apparent street-level representationalism (complete with documentary-style "spontaneity") toward a multidimensional realism, a more complex, self-questioning kind of awareness which insists on the potential for illusion in both the documentary and fictional varieties of film realism.

These musical and cinematic layerings create a collage effect which seems deliberately mild, especially in that it creates no radical fragmentation in the audience's immediate experience of the film. But these layers do set up a sort of free-floating system of cross references which give the film an almost cubist complexity of time and space. The film's basic story moves along in a fairly straight chronological line. But the home movies and the "quoted" music and film clips serve to bring multiple time schemes into play—including not just the past and the present, but the contingent future hypothesized by those casually conjoined layers. These conjunctions help raise the possibility of the film's chronology being a partly illusory and certainly selective sequence of events, but—particularly in retrospect—we can see that the film's first dramatic scene (the departure of Zee's husband) is a flashback that shows us why she is wandering the sidewalks so forlornly (something she is seen doing during the opening credits and then continues to do after this break-up scene, with no change of costume, lighting, or general visual approach). That we're left to deduce the fact of the flashback—no conventional stylistic sign for a time-shift having been given—in effect calls chronological order into question even as the film avoids radical disorientation of the time scheme.

The Black character's direct-address acknowledgement of the camera's presence marks both the climax and the pivotal confirmation of these concerns in the film. At the outset of a ruthlessly unromanticized bedroom scene with the Margotta character, Zee sees photos her would-be seducer has taken of her on the sly, and she senses that their activities of the moment are also being filmed. She angrily looks about for the "hidden" camera, and when she finds what she's looking for, points defiantly at the camera lens which has been recording the scene we have been watching—and hence points also at us. At first, this disruption of the actors' seemingly conventionally illusionistic relationship with the camera comes across as a flip but effective "Brechtian" joke. But here too there are provocative complications. The anger that Zee directs toward the camera is motivated in the narrative by the assumption that her estranged husband is responsible for the camera's spying (in search of divorce-case evidence), but her derision is double-edged: her mockery of her husband's failed search for "damning" evidence is also a mockery of the audiences which seek sexual sensation in film or which focus themselves on voyeuristic consumption of performers' images (her pointedly "ugly" mugging underlines this). Moreover, her denunciation is intercut with what are ostensibly point-of-view shots of the trained pigeon on the windowsill. The result of this editing jape is that, by the logic of conventional editing codes, Zee/Black is identifying the pigeon as the camera. The direct address of the camera clearly precludes such a reading, so that the cuts to the pigeon become part of the comedy of seeing. These cuts seem to presume the audience's having learned the film's "private" language, so that this multi-faceted climactic moment in the film also embraces facetious humor as part of its frisky, formally grounded complexities. Repeat viewings of the film reveal a related kind of comic playfulness in moments where there is a cut at just the point where Zee/Black is on the verge of returning the camera's gaze.

The "nutty" behavior of *Cherry Pie*'s characters makes a connection to screwball comedy evident enough, and the Astaire quotations and reworked home movies provide grace notes which quietly insist that more than nostaligia is involved. But Jaglom's movie does extensive harkening back; rather, *Cherry Pie* is salvaging what it can of pre-World War II romantic "sophistication" for a vision that

clearly means to move on in the present tense. Its homely, unpolished, not-so-traditional graciousness is very much the point—but in a way that gains surprising resonance from the modest means of its formal inventiveness. Its consummately tossed-off blend of montage and sequence shots bespeaks a very contemporary sophistication as well. In career terms, the film represents an unlikely but seamless blend of Jaglom's previous films' tendencies —the modernist discontinuities of *Tracks* and the generous, freewheeling humor of *Sitting Ducks* (I can't speak for *A Safe Place,* which I haven't seen apart from the excerpts in *Cherry Pie*). But *Can She Bake a Cherry Pie?* is more than the convergence of privileged moments in the respective careers of Jaglom, Emil (a Jaglom "regular"), and Black. Very few of Jaglom's contemporaries in American narrative film-making can boast of a more durable or substantial accomplishment.

—PETER HOGUE

The Annual FQ Book Roundup

Below we present as comprehensive coverage as we can manage of the English-language film books published in approximately the past year. A few titles, including several important works, are still out for review and will be covered in subsequent issues, but this year we have compressed our reviews with the aim of including essentially all of them in this one issue. As before, we have grouped titles in two alphabetical-by-author series within each category: the series for longer reviews, and that for briefer listings.

Unfortunately, some bookstores have become reluctant to place orders for single copies of books. Would-be customers lacking access to a full-service bookstore can, however, learn to place their own orders by phone or mail. For some new or obscure publishers we have included a mailing address in our listings. In the case of established publishers we give, according to the usual bibliographic custom, merely city and publisher name. Buyers can ask the 800 information service (dial 800 - 555-1212) if the company in question has a tollfree 800 number, over which orders can be placed. If not, a mailing address can be obtained by phoning a reference librarian or checking reference works such as *Books in Print* or *The Literary Marketplace,* which are available in virtually all libraries.

Because the Editor of *Film Quarterly* is also responsible for University of California Press film books, we give below only brief summaries for UCP titles.

Autobiographies and Biographies

SOUTHERN HORIZONS
The Autobiography of Thomas Dixon

By Thomas Dixon. Alexandria, Va.: IWV Publishing, 1984.

In 1964, D. W. Griffith, Thomas Dixon and one of the two Aitken brothers were dead. While investigating ownership and copyright conditions surrounding *The Birth of a Nation,*

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Raymond Rohauer met Dixon's surviving wife, Madelyn, who granted Rohauer rights to publish her husband's autobiography after her own death. (Supported by additional editorial apparatus, the volume also includes a 1982 Ph.D. dissertation by Karen Crowe.) This material existed in three versions. The second is missing. The published, longer version, is the third, although three of the book's last five chapters are lost.

Dixon undertook fiction after pursuing careers in politics, law, clergy, and the lecture circuit. His early novels sold well, *The Clansman* more than a million copies. Among many other things, *The Birth of a Nation* culminates Dixon's consistent thrust toward wider audiences. He thought himself an educator, dedicated to exposing sins of the past and to correcting the record. Anyone who has read *The Clansman* or *The Leopard's Spots* (written as a sequel to *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* following Simon LeGree into carpetbagging) has been struck by the ardor of Dixon's rhetorical subliterature.

Southern Horizons easily betrays the racist indignations of a post-bellum Southern sensibility. Sections are almost interchangeable with, if more trustworthy than, Griffith's autobiographical fragments. Here are the clumsy black dialects, the spiritual mammies, the drink-crazed ex-slaves, the white trash. The Klan rides to defend white Southern womanhood and Protestantism. Shoeless black legislators pass miscegenation laws. Dixon even subscribes to a kind of Mason-Dixon Lombroso-ism. A black Republican congressman, a remnant of Thaddeus Stevens's Saturnalia of 1868, has ears crushed against his skull, receding forehead, flat nose, thick, cracked lips, and an oblong, protruding stomach. In contrast, Grover Cleveland started as "far from good looking," but "Eight years of . . . high ideals in the pursuit of a great purpose while clothed with the authority of a nation has changed his face and form. The features were handsome. . . . The great thoughts that had filled his mind had incarnated themselves in his body."

Nonetheless, this is hardly all of Dixon, who installed Eugene V. Debs in his pulpit while he toured the lecture circuit to raise money for his battles against Tammany in New York City. Dixon was a classmate and friend of Woodrow Wilson. He knew Steel MacKaye, David Belasco, Frank Norris and John D. Rockefeller. He made and lost fortunes and cared little about money or power. After one session as a legislator, he came to liken politicians to prostitutes. After becoming a lawyer, he found there was one court for the rich, another for the poor—and quit. He denounced the twenties revival of the Klan.

Based on Rohauer's postscript, it appears that both Dixon himself and an incomplete reel-and-a-half KinemaColor-Sound segment of *The Clansman* filmed in 1911 persuaded the Aitkens and Griffith to essay *Birth.* Dixon called in an old favor to arrange for Wilson and his cabinet to see the completed film, and then he managed to show it to the Supreme Court (Chief Justice Edward Douglas White had been a Klan member in New Orleans). In Boston, the manager of the Tremont Theatre planted detectives among the group protesting the film's showing, so that, alerted, a police line beat back "a mob of ten thousand misguided colored men."

Birth of a Nation was Dixon's climax. He made unsuccessful films into the mid-twenties. His novels lost favor. His first marriage fell apart, and he died poor and forgotten, two years before Griffith's similar end.

—JOHN FELL

MASTERS OF THE SOVIET CINEMA
Crippled Creative Biographies

By Herbert Marshall. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984. $29.95.

In the West, commercial pressures suffice, with almost miraculous efficiency, to prevent film-makers from doing anything subversive enough to require suppression by the ruling elite. It takes superhuman dedication (and talent, and luck) to produce a film that's regarded as really dangerous. Peter Watkins achieved it with *The War Game,* which suggested that normal British social order might break down in the event of nuclear war (portrayed in a pre-nuclear-winter mode which now seems relatively innocuous) and recently *Seventeen* achieved it by suggesting that American teen-agers act in ways that adult authorities do not find congenial. Both these cases of suppression involved public broad-

Raymond Rohauer met Dixon's surviving wife, Madelyn, who granted Rohauer rights to publish her husband's autobiography after her own death. (Supported by additional editorial apparatus, the volume also includes a 1982 Ph.D. dissertation by Karen Crowe.) This material existed in three versions. The second is missing. The published, longer version, is the third, although three of the book's last five chapters are lost.

Dixon undertook fiction after pursuing careers in politics, law, clergy, and the lecture circuit. His early novels sold well, *The Clansman* more than a million copies. Among many other things, *The Birth of a Nation* culminates Dixon's consistent thrust toward wider audiences. He thought himself an educator, dedicated to exposing sins of the past and to correcting the record. Anyone who has read *The Clansman* or *The Leopard's Spots* (written as a sequel to *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* following Simon LeGree into carpetbagging) has been struck by the ardor of Dixon's rhetorical subliterature.

Southern Horizons easily betrays the racist indignations of a post-bellum Southern sensibility. Sections are almost interchangeable with, if more trustworthy than, Griffith's autobiographical fragments. Here are the clumsy black dialects, the spiritual mammies, the drink-crazed ex-slaves, the white trash. The Klan rides to defend white Southern womanhood and Protestantism. Shoeless black legislators pass miscegenation laws. Dixon even subscribes to a kind of Mason-Dixon Lombroso-ism. A black Republican congressman, a remnant of Thaddeus Stevens's Saturnalia of 1868, has ears crushed against his skull, receding forehead, flat nose, thick, cracked lips, and an oblong, protruding stomach. In contrast, Grover Cleveland started as "far from good looking," but "Eight years of . . . high ideals in the pursuit of a great purpose while clothed with the authority of a nation has changed his face and form. The features were handsome. . . . The great thoughts that had filled his mind had incarnated themselves in his body."

Nonetheless, this is hardly all of Dixon, who installed Eugene V. Debs in his pulpit while he toured the lecture circuit to raise money for his battles against Tammany in New York City. Dixon was a classmate and friend of Woodrow Wilson. He knew Steel MacKaye, David Belasco, Frank Norris and John D. Rockefeller. He made and lost fortunes and cared little about money or power. After one session as a legislator, he came to liken politicians to prostitutes. After becoming a lawyer, he found there was one court for the rich, another for the poor—and quit. He denounced the twenties revival of the Klan.

Based on Rohauer's postscript, it appears that both Dixon himself and an incomplete reel-and-a-half KinemaColor-Sound segment of *The Clansman* filmed in 1911 persuaded the Aitkens and Griffith to essay *Birth.* Dixon called in an old favor to arrange for Wilson and his cabinet to see the completed film, and then he managed to show it to the Supreme Court (Chief Justice Edward Douglas White had been a Klan member in New Orleans). In Boston, the manager of the Tremont Theatre planted detectives among the group protesting the film's showing, so that, alerted, a police line beat back "a mob of ten thousand misguided colored men."

Birth of a Nation was Dixon's climax. He made unsuccessful films into the mid-twenties. His novels lost favor. His first marriage fell apart, and he died poor and forgotten, two years before Griffith's similar end.

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One such pocket opened up in Russia just after the Soviet revolution, and in it flourished the subjects of this book, the great first generation of Pudovkin, Vertov, Dovzhenko and Eisenstein. After the death of Lenin and the consolidation of Stalin's police-state power, the lives of all became tragedies compounded with political farce, generally ending in decades of creative inaction and despair. Marshall, then a film-maker, knew or met them all (he is now professor emeritus of Southern Illinois University). He sets down their stories in some detail, and gives sympathetic accounts of both their completed work and their aborted projects. The book is valuable mainly for its biographical side (Marshall seems to consider Vertov's *Kinopravda* equivalent to the later *cinéma-vérité,* and perhaps confuses the latter with Godard's "Dziga Vertov Group"), and is readable and well organized. Marshall takes many occasions to attack the views of Ivor Montagu, whom he considers a vicious Stalinist apologist, and the role of the Party in creating objective and subjective patterns of repression unmatched in film history. —E.C.

ROBERT J. FLAHERTY: A BIOGRAPHY

By Paul Rotha, ed. by Jay Ruby. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983. $25.00.

"Until recently," writes Jay Ruby in the introduction to this excellent Paul Rotha biography of Robert Flaherty which Ruby edited, "the scholarship and popular press surrounding Flaherty have tended toward two extremes—portraying him in mythical terms and 'worshiping' his films or debunking them as fakes and frauds and castigating him for a lack of social and political consciousness." Elements of these extreme positions continue to crop up in discussions of Flaherty, as they did at the 1978 International Ethnographic Film Conference in Canberra, Australia, which I reported on in *Film Quarterly* (Spring 1983, pp. 30–43). However, the current trend in Flaherty scholarship is to look for a healthy synthesis, or, as Ruby puts it, "the dialectical relationship between 'Flaherty the myth' and 'Flaherty the romantic fraud'."

To facilitate a demystifying, rather than a debunking of Flaherty, Ruby has prepared an edited version of the biography of Flaherty written more than twenty years ago by Paul Rotha, but never hitherto published. The history of this biography is indeed a curious one. Begun immediately after Flaherty's death in 1951, it was originally conceived as a collaborative effort by Rotha and Basil Wright, both of them film-making colleagues and friends of Flaherty from 1932 until Flaherty's death. However, Wright's film-making commitments became too great for him to continue work on the Flaherty biography, which became Rotha's sole responsibility. Rotha completed an initial draft in 1959, which he then circulated to Flaherty's widow, Frances, as well as to Flaherty's brother, David, and to others (such as John Grierson, Richard Griffith, John Taylor, Newton Rowe, John Monck and Helen van Dongen) who had worked with Flaherty over the years. Their comments were then incorporated into the text of a final edited version which Rotha submitted to his prospective publisher, Hutchinson. They found the manuscript "too scholarly," and suggested a more popular approach to such a colorful character as Flaherty.

Rotha did not wish to redo the book this way, but he graciously turned over the manuscript to Arthur Calder-Marshall, who used it as "research notes" for his own popular biography, *The Innocent Eye: The Life of Robert J. Flaherty* (W. H. Allen & Co., 1963). The Rotha manuscript, although duly cited as the basis for Calder-Marshall's biography, remained unpublished and, it would seem, almost forgotten, until 1979, when Jay Ruby,

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researching the early years of Flaherty's career, discovered an unedited draft of the Rotha manuscript among the papers of Flaherty's widow, Frances, at Columbia University. Ruby found Rotha's chapter on *Nanook of the North* far richer than Calder-Marshall's, so he contacted Rotha and obtained permission to publish the chapter in an issue of *Studies in Visual Communication* (vol. 6, no. 2, 1980). Moreover, realizing as he read through the entire Rotha manuscript that the whole book was immensely richer than what had been published elsewhere, Ruby persuaded the University of Pennsylvania Press to publish it.

Ruby states in the introduction that he prepared this edition "by comparing" the unedited draft from Columbia University's Butler Library with the edited manuscript that Rotha deposited in the Grierson Archive at the University of Sterling in Scotland. One can only assume—since Ruby doesn't specify—that this edited manuscript contained the same incorporation of colleagues' comments about Flaherty as did the edited manuscript Rotha originally submitted to his prospective publisher. One can also only assume—again, because Ruby doesn't specify—that in "comparing" the unedited and edited manuscripts, he must surely have opted, at least most of the time, for the edited version which incorporated the invaluable insights and multiplicity of points of view on Flaherty from those who had known and worked with him. Certainly this new edition is rich in material of this sort. Yet it is curious that Ruby does not explicitly clarify these points, especially since he is generally the most scrupulous of scholars in clearly stating at the outset his methodologies. In this case, if only because of Ruby's uncharacteristic lapse, scholars may wish to do their own comparing of manuscripts to see what material came from where, and what, if anything, was left out.

Scholarly quibbles aside, what is presented in this edition of Rotha's study of Flaherty is an amazing wealth of material that provides the most well rounded portrait of Flaherty's work and life yet published. Paul Rotha, of course, was extremely well placed to offer such a portrait. A prominent figure himself in the British film world, particularly in documentary circles, Rotha had been a member of John Grierson's remarkable Empire Marketing Board Film Unit, which in 1932 hired Flaherty, just back from filming *Moana* in Samoa, to collaborate with Grierson on the film *Industrial Britain*. Rotha is thus able to offer an insider's view on much of Flaherty's career, especially of his interactions with other such "prime movers" of British documentary as Grierson and Basil Wright, and Rotha himself.

By no means slighted, however, are the important pre-1932 years of Flaherty's career, which Rotha, who did not know Flaherty at the time, has researched with loving, although not quite exhaustive care. As Ruby diplomatically points out in his introduction, "When Rotha wrote this biography, certain aspects of Flaherty's early career were considered less interesting than others. The Flahertys—Robert, Frances, and David—had decided that Flaherty's pre-*Nanook* activities as photographer and film-maker were not worth bothering about." In this respect (although not in others), Rotha follows the family line; consequently he makes only slight reference to Flaherty's first film-making effort, a travel-adventure introduction to the world of Nanook. Flaherty completed the editing of this film, sometimes called the "original *Nanook,*" in 1916, only to see the original nitrate print go up in flames when he dropped a lighted cigarette onto it, badly burning himself in the process. Of this 1916 film, which, in retrospect, the Flahertys came to realize was not a good film, only an unreproducible work print (sometimes referred to as the "Harvard Print") survived until about 1928, when it too was lost—although not before John Grierson had occasion to see it. Recalling it in 1951, Grierson confirmed the Flahertys' appraisal that this first film-making effort by Robert Flaherty was relatively unsuccessful.

In any case, for material on this pre-*Nanook* phase, on the possible influences on Flaherty's film-making style, on the lessons he learned from this initial setback, and on his fine work as a still photographer from these early Arctic expeditions, one must turn not to Rotha's biography but to the excellent catalog edited by Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, entitled *Robert Flaherty: Photographer/Filmmaker* (Vancouver Art Gallery, 1980), which contains, among other interesting items, an important essay by Jay Ruby.

Rotha does a good job of providing an account of how Flaherty worked, and of the controversies that usually surrounded Flaherty's films. The 1926 text of Arctic expert Viljalmur Steffanson, elaborating all the errors, implicit and explicit, in Flaherty's *Nanook,* makes fascinating reading, as do all the pros and cons that greeted Flaherty's 1934 film *Man of Aran.* (Although, here, especially—and, to a lesser extent, elsewhere in this study—Rotha disparagingly makes it sound as if the only articles castigating Flaherty for his "romantic escapism" were written "from a Communist viewpoint.")

Rotha, with help from Grierson, gives an amusing account of how Flaherty, traveling around the American farm states in 1939 shooting *The Land,* finally had his political consciousness raised by the plight of the Dust Bowl victims. Dining with Grierson one night, Flaherty exhorted, "God, John, you don't realise it, but some people starve in this world." To which Grierson replied, "That's what I've been trying to tell you, you stupid old bastard, for twenty years." Throughout this book Rotha fondly traces the twists and turns of the long friendship between Flaherty and his self-appointed "critical attorney," Grierson; and it is amazing how often Grierson, who in his own work championed the hard-hitting documentary approach, characterized by stirring montage effects, in which film was conceived as an instrument for social change, came generously to the defense of Flaherty's more contemplative, elegaic and intensely personal films. Judicious in his criticisms of Flaherty's romantic escapism, effusive in his praise of the poetry of Flaherty's original inspiration, Grierson, like Rotha, seems masterfully adept at articulating a healthy dialectical synthesis between "Flaherty the myth" and "Flaherty the romantic fraud."

Yet, to his credit, Rotha does not shy away from presenting ample evidence of some disquieting quirks in Flaherty's personality. Describing how Flaherty worked, and drawing on testimony from his widow, Frances, Rotha notes that

> When making *Moana,* he had cultivated the idea that the islanders on Savaii should regard him as the Big White Chief. Only if they revered him and respected him could he get them to do what he wanted. In Mysore [when filming *Elephant Boy*], Flaherty liked to make Sabu think of him as God. He allowed no one else in the unit to show him affection. The same had happened with [the boy] Mikeleen on Aran and was to happen with [the boy] Napoleon in Louisiana.

Moreover, Rotha points out that after *Nanook* all Flaherty's films, save *Industrial Britain* (which was originally Grierson's conception) and *The Land* (which Pare Lorentz, at Grierson's suggestion, invited Flaherty to make), and even all his unrealized ideas for films, were "haunted by the image of a youth or a boy, symbol perhaps not only of purity and innocence but also of the son he desired and never possessed." Rotha, who notes in passing that he, Grierson and others often remarked on the strangely asexual quality of Flaherty's films (even when filming the extraordinarily uninhibited Samoans), shies away from any "psychobiography" of Flaherty. But he acknowledges that "This boy image, however, may be explained in other ways." One hypothesis cited by Rotha is that of John Goldman, another of Flaherty's colleagues, who is quoted at length; he asserts that Flaherty, sickened by our modern civilization, repeatedly took refuge in a world of romanticized childhood. Goldman argues that as Flaherty himself got older, this regression into childhood became ever more strained, ever more remote from reality. Where the Eskimos and Samoans were loved and idealized by Flaherty as whole, integrated societies of happy, childlike beings, his later films have only the sketchiest outlines of adults, mere silhouettes on the horizon, and the films are increasingly built around idealized boy figures. Rotha quotes Goldman to the effect that

> . . . when we come to *Man of Aran* where are the people? They have become divorced from themselves and from each other. . . . Only the boy remains, but already a kind of idealised boy, living in Arkadia. By the time of *Elephant Boy,* a whole film is now built around the boy. In *Louisiana Story* again nothing really remains but the boy. The adults are almost banished.

There seems little doubt that Flaherty believed intuitively in some primal wisdom, to which "primitive" peoples and children, dwelling in remote corners of the world such as the Arctic North or the South Seas or the primeval Louisiana bayous, had direct access. Just what we adults caught up in urban civilization are to make of this aspect of Flaherty's vision is left up to us by Rotha. There is, one

suspects, after reading this fine book, still much work to be done on the life and work of Robert Flaherty. Yet, to say this is not to denigrate the achievements of Rotha. On the contrary, by not rounding off the rough edges, he has provided us with a wealth of important and useful material. Now it is up to us.

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ASTAIRE
The Man, The Dancer

By Bob Thomas, with comments by Fred Astaire. New York: St. Martin's, 1984. $18.95.

Authorized biographies are like autobiographies by people who don't need the money —no titillating disclosures. So interest rests here on the consummate professional, who compares perhaps most easily with Chaplin (Astaire liked to mime other dancers): a no-nonsense approach to entertainment, endless work to make everything look easy, vaudeville, movies, wealth, self-absorption in craft. In Astaire's case, musical comedy served as an interim training ground, often a source of movie material, of friendships, routines and stagings. *Limehouse Blues* in *Ziegfeld Follies,* for example, closely resembles something called *Beggar's Waltz* out of *The Band Wagon* in 1931.

Arlene Croce's *The Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers Book* appears in Thomas's bibliography, but no use of its outstanding dance analyses is made. Thomas's interest is the theatrical world and sometimes the estated wealth where Fred and Adele Astaire, first together, then separately, lived. Even so, bits of information fit easily into other puzzles. It had never occurred to me that the musical comedy other-couple plots of the Rogers–Astaire RKO's really served to halve screen-time demands so that dance numbers could be rehearsed and production shortened. Hermes Pan speaks of acquainting Astaire with various black steps and rhythms, learned in his own Southern childhood. Like the post-Bill Robinson generation of tap dancers, Astaire liked John Bubbles. Honi Coles once described Astaire as "the best dancer. Not the best *tap* dancer but the best dancer."

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Worthington Miner, Interviewed by Franklin J. Schaffner. Directors Guild of America and Scarecrow Press (Metuchen, NJ), 1985. $22.50. Miner, who was a television producer and created the Studio One series in TV's "Golden Age," turns out to be a wonderfully literate and witty chap, and Schaffner is an attentive, informed, self-effacing and perspicacious interviewer. The time covered runs from Miner's early stage directing days through the McCarthy madness to his last two decades at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. Delicious nostalgia mixed with plenty of bitchy wit, and the atmosphere of a real conversation. —E.C.

Attenborough, Richard. *In Search of Gandhi.* Piscataway, NJ: New Century, 1983. $17.95. The story of Attenborough's dogged devotion to his project, which took two decades to set up, is virtually an autobiography in disguise, since his childhood and youth and most of his career are sketched out in detail. The actual shooting of the film occupies only a small section of the book, and descriptions of financial negotiations are fuller than those of script development. Nonetheless, Attenborough comes through in an interesting and sometimes moving way, as a person who tried (against the well-meant advice of friends, colleagues, agent, and potential backers) to do something on the screen that would truly matter to the world. Even those who quibble with the resulting film should find its evolution intriguing, and the story is copiously illustrated with archival shots of Gandhi, snapshots of Attenborough and his collaborators, and color stills from the film. Interesting if not flattering light is also thrown on Joe Levine, who originally agreed to back the project. —E.C.

Roberts, Allen and Max Goldstein. *Henry Fonda: A Biography.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1984. $15.95. If his Midwestern upbringing doesn't suffice to explain Fonda's somewhat remote character, it's intriguing that he had Dutch ancestors (of Italian origins, not the true-blue Calvinist line). Much of his life reads like *On Golden Pond,* his by then fond daughter's present to him, with shadows of *Wild Strawberries* thrown in. Yet, as his last wife surmised, it may have been precisely his personal shyness that drove him to the actor's craft. —E.C.

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Attenborough, Richard. *In Search of Gandhi.* Piscataway, NJ: New Century, 1983. $17.95. The story of Attenborough's dogged devotion to his project, which took two decades to set up, is virtually an autobiography in disguise, since his childhood and youth and most of his career are sketched out in detail. The actual shooting of the film occupies only a small section of the book, and descriptions of financial negotiations are fuller than those of script development. Nonetheless, Attenborough comes through in an interesting and sometimes moving way, as a person who tried (against the well-meant advice of friends, colleagues, agent, and potential backers) to do something on the screen that would truly matter to the world. Even those who quibble with the resulting film should find its evolution intriguing, and the story is copiously illustrated with archival shots of Gandhi, snapshots of Attenborough and his collaborators, and color stills from the film. Interesting if not flattering light is also thrown on Joe Levine, who originally agreed to back the project. —E.C.

Roberts, Allen and Max Goldstein. *Henry Fonda: A Biography.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1984. $15.95. If his Midwestern upbringing doesn't suffice to explain Fonda's somewhat remote character, it's intriguing that he had Dutch ancestors (of Italian origins, not the true-blue Calvinist line). Much of his life reads like *On Golden Pond,* his by then fond daughter's present to him, with shadows of *Wild Strawberries* thrown in. Yet, as his last wife surmised, it may have been precisely his personal shyness that drove him to the actor's craft. —E.C.

Adamson, Joe. *Byron Haskin: A Directors Guild of America Oral History.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1984. $22.50. Haskin's commercial success largely stemmed from SF efforts—Robin Crusoe on Mars, War of the Worlds. He had no great enthusiasm for it, but SF, alongside swashbucklers like *His Majesty O'Keefe,* combined Haskin's coordinating intelligence with his cameraman skills and the wisdom from years of running Warner's special effects unit. The book's reminiscences often highlight pitfalls of a small-budget director in uneasy relation to money and authority. In early sections, Haskin is in his element: a confident, imaginative, innovative cameraman discussing multiple cameras

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alarmingly sure grasp of the mechanics of narrative, Social Darwinism, and paleontology, as he documents the fictional lost-world antecedents (Verne, Burroughs, Conan Doyle, etc.) of *Kong,* and describes the "circus-exaggerated energy" of the movie, which is seen, in retrospect, to have been created in the image of its entrepreneur-hero Denham (Robert Armstrong). Carroll is particularly skillful at detailing the story's beginnings in mystery, though an interpretive leap to Fay Wray-as-Kong's-mother (from Kong-as-child, a more tenable postulate) weakens his concluding paragraphs. Some of the other contributors here apply theory cookie-cutter-like to films; the titles change, but the films all sound the same. Carroll lets the film dictate the theory, or approach.

Cinema-psychoanalysts Kawin, Telotte, and Charlene Bunnell suggest, in their respective essays, that horror movies are—rather like spinach—good for you, that an hour and a half with *Psycho* is as therapeutic as an hour and a half on the psychiatrist's couch. They are, perhaps, overreacting to the more generally held, patently incredible notion that horror movies are bad for you. The-Gothic-as-therapy. The idea that, say, *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* could have a salutary effect on your life is, at least, a more appealingly perverse proposition than the movie itself. In Kawin's "The Mummy's Pool," it is not, we learn, nine tana leaves which motivate Kharis in the Universal mummy series of the forties, but "neurotic possessiveness." True enough, but the battery of Freudian terms which Kawin employs would be more appropriate for The Mummy's Neurosis than it is for *The Mummy's Ghost.* However, he prefaces his remarks on the latter movie—and on the Karloff *Mummy*—with some sound notes on the distinction, in film, between horror and science fiction: the latter genre, as he sees it, embraces the value of knowing; the former, "the dread of knowing." Bunnell, also pro-enlightenment, discusses the appeal of "The Gothic" to the intellect as well as to the emotions, while Lowry and deCordova almost get lost in "enunciation" and "diegetic" and "hermeneutic." But the core of their article is a painstaking, precise examination—complete with a series of frame blowups—of one sequence in *White Zombie,* a semi-neglected classic which, despite its (dear) flaws, can only benefit from such patient reconsideration.

Wood's article (to which at least five of the other contributors refer) is titled, modestly, "An Introduction to the American Horror Film." It might just as well be titled An Introduction to America, or An Introduction to Civilization. It's so far-ranging that it winds up more a catalogue than an essay, containing as it does no less than 12 separate (official and unofficial, numbered and unnumbered) lists, from items repressed by "our culture" (e.g., bisexuality and infantile sexuality) to "recurrent motifs" in horror films since 1960, or *Psycho.* It's some kind of a feat just to have marshaled so many troops—Wood can hardly be blamed if he can't get them moving. His "introduction" is a treasure-trove of tantalizing, half-developed ideas—on the "foreignness" of horror in thirties shockers, on progressive vs. reactionary horror movies, on "the concept of Otherness"—which ideas other critics (like Sharrett and Rodowick, here) have already, eagerly, begun developing. Wood is becoming the Johnny Appleseed of English-language film criticism, strewing seeds of thought and traveling on, leaving the cultivation of the orchards to others.

Mary B. Campbell is (apart from Carroll) the most interesting of the "independents" in Grant's book. In her piece, she identifies the properties of David Cronenberg's films with those of ancient alchemy: in Cronenberg, the Midas touch becomes the contagion of icky diseases, in *They Came from Within* and *Rabid.* The "regenerative powers of modern technology" prove disastrous when what is regenerated and spawned are VD parasites—now, you can see the horror in transit, body-to-body; no need to wait for symptoms to show up. Sharon Russell offers a feminist view of "The Witch in Film," which contrasts the "free-lance" witch of folklore—the woman with the power—with the male-dominated (or devil-dominated) witch of film. A footnote to this reactionary tendency: in *The Touch of Melissa* (1972), the witch harks to a devil with a woman's voice. Also of note: Dennis Giles's "Conditions of Pleasure in Horror Cinema," which concerns "anticipation" scenes, or what used to be called "suggestion," and what he calls "figuration"—those

scenes before (and after) the Big Shock Scene.
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On the whole, Gance has been getting somewhat better (scholarly) press than Griffith for the past few years, probably because of Kevin Brownlow's restoration of *Napoleon.* Now if only someone will do the same for *Intolerance!* But the current critical interest in Gance outstrips public knowledge of his films. A promised restoration of *La Roue* is presumably still hiding in the corridors of Images Film Archive, and the silent *J'Accuse,* so different from the available sound remake, together with other important works, are all virtually unseeable.

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On the whole, Gance has been getting somewhat better (scholarly) press than Griffith for the past few years, probably because of Kevin Brownlow's restoration of *Napoleon.* Now if only someone will do the same for *Intolerance!* But the current critical interest in Gance outstrips public knowledge of his films. A promised restoration of *La Roue* is presumably still hiding in the corridors of Images Film Archive, and the silent *J'Accuse,* so different from the available sound remake, together with other important works, are all virtually unseeable.

scenes before (and after) the Big Shock Scene.
—DON WILLIS

THE CZECHOSLOVAK NEW WAVE

By Peter Hames. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985. $35.00.

In the late sixties Czech films dominated the festival circuit with works that extended from conventional realism through lyrical and surrealist approaches to the experimental (and feminist) works of Vera Chytilova. Hames shows how the new wave film-makers drew upon the rich resources of Czechoslovak culture, and also examines the current post-invasion situation.
—E.C.

THE FILMS OF GEORGE ROY HILL

By Andrew Horton. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.

Horton is not only a film teacher but a scriptwriter, working with Yugoslav director Srdjan Karanovic on *Something in Between* and other films; and much of the appeal that Hill's work has for him lies in its structural craft and polish—as well as in a certain persistent chilly irony. ("Nothing ever ends happily," says Hill, who gave Horton lengthy interviews while he was writing the book.)

Horton traces Hill's career from Minnesota beginnings through Yale dramatics to Dublin, live TV, and Broadway. He then gives accounts of the production of each film, and a critical discussion largely focussed on questions of dramatic form and impact, but with frequent attention to the visual side of the films also. He notes the intricately playful way Hill handles the medium, often layering levels of the more or less real, more or less present. (He prints the script for a scene omitted from *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*—the immense hit which made the careers of Hill, scriptwriter William Goldman, and Robert Redford—in which the heroes foresee their own deaths in a film within the film.) Horton's estimate of Hill seems to me unduly high—in fact he has hardly an unkind word to say about any of his work; but his analysis of Hill's strategies, from the viewpoint of a fellow practitioner, is always interestingly detailed, coping with the available alternatives as Hill and his coworkers faced them. And his claims for a thematic coherence in the films—stories of charming fantasists living out their fantasies to the bitter end—are cogently argued.
—E.C.

ABEL GANCE

By Norman King. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985. $11.95, paper.

In many ways, Abel Gance is the D. W. Griffith of the French cinema. Historically, he follows Griffith by just a bit (first scenarios, 1910; first film direction 1912), but the numerous parallels of social position, career trajectory, and experiments with film style spring, I think, more from similarity of temperament than from conscious or unconscious hero worship on Gance's part. Both men straddle the line of demarcation between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. To audiences today, they seem both modern and hopelessly dated. Like Griffith, Gance was at home in the complementary areas of melodrama and historical epic. Like Griffith, he was simultaneously an internationalist/pacifist and also a compleat imperialist. Both men constantly tinkered with their films, to the point where there is no possible "authentic" version of *Napoleon* or *Intolerance,* simply versions with greater or lesser amounts of surviving footage. Both men were attracted by grand subjects, and both were inordinately fond of self aggrandisement.

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This makes for a bit of a problem with Norman King's excellent book, which assumes all too often that the reader is reasonably familiar with for the moment quite obscure works. Those unfamiliar with the films and their larger-than-life creator will perhaps want first to read Steven Kramer and James Welsh's 1978 volume on Gance. Armed with this and a viewing of, say, *Napoleon, Beethoven,* and the sound version of *J'Accuse* (these are the major Gance works in US distribution—the reader is formally warned against the execrable *Lucrecia Borgia*), one is ready to approach King's stimulating examination of this much misunderstood director.

Aside from the intrinsic interest of Gance, King's book also has the important merit of attempting to cast director studies in a new mold. King has chosen two strategies that seem worthy of note and possibly of emulation. First, he includes a fair amount of primary source material—excerpts from screenplays, critical reactions to the films from various theoretical and political positions, and some little-known bits of Gance as film theorist. These are not assembled at random, however, in a sort of "Focus on Abel Gance." King has a critical agenda, and the primary source material gives way logically to the author's own analysis. And this is the second aspect of the book's originality. This analysis does not proceed film by film, nor even theme by theme. King's argument follows a series of critical-theoretical difficulties posed by the films. These are: the films' relations to the history they so often depict; the inextricability of the domains of politics and the aesthetic; and finally, spectator positioning and its relation to the two previous questions.

The book is comparatively unusual in utilizing some sophisticated modern critical terms and concepts while unapologetically positing the existence of a real person named Abel Gance who lived at a certain point in history and who was, in fact, *responsible* for much if not all of what was in his films. No "death of the author" here, nor any shilly-shallying with quotation marks (as in: this book isn't about Douglas Sirk, but about the "Sirk" who may be constructed from a certain set of films, etc.). King says, and I agree with him, that "to dismiss the author as merely a fiction constructed from traces or consistencies within the films is just another way of denying history" (p. 10). Nonetheless, it seems to me that he goes a bit too far, near the end of his book, when he maintains that for the spectator Gance is "present invisibly as the force behind the camera" in the viewing process (p. 200), or that the contents of the image are "all subordinated to a metadiscourse, to the authority of the director" (p. 181). It is clear that this is how Gance *wanted* things to be—think of his various ways of "signing" his films, again reminiscent of Griffith—but *is* it so? Probably for some spectators and not for others. The working-class patrons of cheap suburban cinemas who so loved *Napoleon* presumably neither knew nor cared much who Abel Gance was.

But these problems aside (for the moment—I will return to King's problematic final chapter), such strong emphasis on the director as historically placed individual is crucial in clarifying the central theme of this book, Gance's work as "reactionary innovation." As King points out, this is a contradiction in terms for many film scholars, for whom (a) all "formal" innovation is by definition progressive, regardless of the "content" it conveys, and (b) reactionary art almost inevitably aligns itself with naturalism. ("Old-fashioned" Marxists like Lukács and his intellectual descendants, of course, would never make such an assumption. For them, Gance would come as the very confirmation of the political dangers of unmotivated or wrongly motivated formal experiment.) King's answer to how Gance can be both formally innovative and politically reactionary is to position him as an "elitist populist," which is to say, anti-bourgeois, anti-republican (like so many intellectuals of his day, Gance saw the Third Republic as hopelessly corrupt), believing in the necessity of spiritual regeneration coming from "the people" led by "natural" leaders like—Napoleon. Tracing Gance's career, King argues convincingly that the director was ahead of his time in at least one unfortunate way, being a sort of premature *Pétainiste;* already by the mid-thirties his ideology prefigured that of the Occupation's Vichy government. (*Blind Venus,* in the print preserved at the Cinémathèque de Toulouse and shown

recently at the Museum of Modern Art, opens with an enthusiastic dedication to Marshall Pétain.)

Classifying Gance as an elitist populist enables King to argue that, far from there being any dichotomy between "progressive" style and "reactionary" content in the director's work, style and content are uniquely matched. When critics and historians call Gance an innovator, they generally refer to the bravura moments of rapid editing in *La Roue,* or the triple images from *Napoleon,* or other similarly exhibitionistic passages. These are moments when narrative gives way to spectacle, though never completely. As King says of the triptychs in *Napoleon:*

> The opening out of the space of spectacle completes the process by which *the values incarnated by Bonaparte are conferred on to the film.* Images of power are transformed into the power of the image. In short, the aesthetic experience of the spectator absorbs and supplants the political rationale established within the image. It is the whole audience which, in its collective response to the film, is summoned to experience that romantic unity which Bonaparte exemplified in the past. As Gance explained in his presentation of the film at the Opéra, the audience should be swept along in the rhythm of the images. (p. 209, my emphasis)

In this and other commentaries, King's political analysis of Gance, and of his films, is to my mind quite satisfactory. It forms the work's intellectual backbone, centered on Chapter 6 but also serving as justification for most of the primary source materials in Chapters 2 through 4. There remain two problems with the rest of the book that are worth mentioning, however.

King's Chapter 5 is called "Narrative and History," and it argues that Gance's work divides, not always film by film, into the complementary genres of melodrama and historical epic. (What King and others call "melodrama" in this case is probably more correctly seen as a continuation of the *drame bourgeois.*) In analyzing the "melodramas" King comes perilously close to the traditional *auteur* analysis he otherwise avoids. The prototype Gance "melodrama" has no real villain (this is why I would argue that it isn't classic melodrama), but a kind of division of the hero into two (two brothers, in the sound remake of *Mater Dolorosa* and in *La Fin du monde*). This division works itself out in various ways in the films, but King sees it as a constant. Now, ungrounded like this, this analysis seems less than convincing. One expects a discussion of the "real" Abel Gance, whom one meets elsewhere in the book, to tie it to. But what we get instead is a "Gance" in quotation marks.

The other problem is more serious. (Traditional *auteur* analysis isn't necessarily incorrect, just insufficient.) In his final chapter King elaborates an argument about spectatorship that, as I have already suggested, seems to me to go off the deep end, critically. Here is a representative passage:

> The narrative look of melodrama draws the spectator into the frame, constructing the protagonist as spectacle; the film, as performance, operates not just as metadiscourse but as ultimate spectacle. . . . Mediation is a passage from one direct look to another, from into the frame to at the frame, from melodrama to epic and from hero to author. We pass from the aspiration towards unity as resolution of melodrama, through the unified hero poet of action, to the film itself as authority, energy and unity. (p. 201)

There is some ambiguity, at least to me, as to whether we are to take such passages as being about a real order of spectatorial events in time—the viewer first sees the image, then a look within the image, etc.—or about a *theoretical,* conceptual "order" of spectatorial experience. However, the really crucial problem is that the film passages discussed in this chapter are not, alas, described with any real clarity, and so one is at a loss as to how to read the entire conclusion of the book, and its central theme of spectator positioning. A little formal rigor *à la* David Bordwell's book on Dreyer, complete with shot breakdowns and so on, would have cleared things up. Or perhaps I am being obtuse, and others will read this chapter and say: Well, of course! But even if this proves to be the case, it still strikes me that Norman King's otherwise very powerful book ends in a rather unfocused way.

—ALAN WILLIAMS

A POSSIBLE CINEMA
The Films of Alain Tanner

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Leach analyzes all the films up to *The White City* (of which he gives only a brief account) in a careful and sensitive way. He has read everything that has been written about Tanner —and John Berger—and he provides full readings of the political and social meanings of the films. The treatment is sensitive to the interconnections between the films, and to Tanner's unusual situation as a film-maker operating in Switzerland. Leach quietly corrects mistakes and what he sees as misconceptions about Tanner's work. The result is a readable and succinct summary of some of the most intriguing films made in recent decades, but there is something monotone about it. We can infer that Leach is rather fond of the films, and that he has a healthy respect for Tanner's *oeuvre,* but the analysis is carried out in such an impersonal and uniform manner that it's impossible to tell (for instance) whether he believes Tanner's recent evolution toward what Berger calls "films of a looser structure" is satisfying or not. You have to have your own passion about Tanner to make this dispassionate analysis interesting. —E.C.

MIZOGUCHI

By Keiko I. McDonald. Boston: Twayne, 1984. $16.95.

Under the impetus of neoformalist and feminist film criticism, Kenji Mizoguchi has emerged as perhaps the most significant of Japan's classical directors for Western film scholars. Yet the very complexity of his use of the long-take/moving camera and his profound ambivalence toward the image and place of women in Japanese society, combined with the daunting enormity of his output, have seemingly discouraged full-length attempts to come to terms with his cinema. Keiko I. McDonald's *Mizoguchi* is therefore of great importance, marking the first English-language effort to encapsulate the totality of Mizoguchi's achievements.

Working within the limitations of length and format imposed by the Twayne Filmmakers series (now defunct), McDonald's book is an admirable and on the whole satisfying introduction to Mizoguchi's life and work. McDonald's intention, as she states it, is to answer the question, "How can the critic born and raised in the Japanese tradition show Western viewers how to 'read' Mizoguchi's films?" To this end, McDonald puts to good use her advantages and expertise.

One of the book's most valuable contributions is to demonstrate how Mizoguchi's cinema must be seen in the context of *contemporary* Japanese culture. Whereas many critics, here and in Japan, are quick to point out Mizoguchi's utilization of traditional Japanese artistic motifs drawn from genres like picture scrolls or Zen ink painting, McDonald discusses the influence on Mizoguchi of twentieth-century novelists like Soseki, Kyoka and Kafu, and of the Japanese theater known as *Shinpa.* In fact, one wishes that there was more depth to these inter-textual references as it is likely that few film scholars, teachers and students are familiar with *Shinpa* or the writers in question.

Another advantage of McDonald's book is its reliance on Japanese sources for secondary support of its major contentions. Important insights into Mizoguchi's work have been gleaned from the writings of film directors Kaneto Shindo and Yasuzo Masmura and from Mizoguchi's long-time screenwriter Yoshikata Yoda, in addition to major works of Japanese film criticism. These provide long-needed glimpses into Mizoguchi's status in Japan and the Japanese perception of his formal and thematic concerns.

McDonald's main focus, however, may be described as traditionally *auteurist.* McDonald postulates primary thematic and stylistic tendencies and traces their growth and development over the course of Mizoguchi's long career. For McDonald, Mizoguchi's main theme is the long-suffering woman put upon by a male-dominated, money-oriented society; his major stylistic trait is the long-take/moving camera. It is the latter that occupies her greatest interest as she tries to show how Mizoguchi makes the camera "talk." While McDonald does pay careful attention to the mobile camera, she cannot be placed within the neoformalist/modernist camp. Camera movement for McDonald does not necessarily create a separate spatial plane alongside the narrative; rather, she feels the camera is expressive—expressive of narrative movement,

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COSTA-GAVRAS
The Political Fiction Film

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There's almost too much information in Michalczyk's book on Costa-Gavras, the Greek-born director whose name has become synonymous with political fiction film. Still, too much is better than not enough and those interested in political cinema in general, and Costa-Gavras specifically, will find a wealth of material here.

Michalczyk starts off with a strong introduction in which he exhibits a thorough knowledge of international cinema and delves into Hollywood's occasional flirtation with the political film. Michalczyk also categorizes political films according to their aims: to inform, to call to action, to document, etc.

Of course, Costa-Gavras has been attacked by those he exposes: dictatorships, torturers, CIA operatives, etc. But criticism has also come from those who agree with his general principles while disagreeing with his methods. His films have been seen as taking a manicheistic approach to characters, ignoring complex political issues.

The form/content argument also rears its head. Many have charged, starting with *Cahiers du Cinéma* writers in the late sixties, that films such as Costa-Gavras's are no different from other Hollywood fare and can have no real political impact. It's possible to understand the vehemence of this criticism from the left as part of the search for ideological purity. But, it's also time to realize that we need a plurivocal approach to political speech: different films for different audiences, a coexistence of voices which all decry repression. Michalczyk dutifully includes Costa-Gavras's detractors and their points of view.

As in most auteurist studies, the book begins with biographical data about the director before taking a chronological approach to the films, beginning with the first feature, *The Sleeping Car Murder,* and ending with comments on *Missing.* (The book was finished before the release of *Hanna K.*) Each film is dissected along the same lines, a process which almost becomes mechanical from chapter to chapter. Michalczyk introduces the narrative, discusses the original source, then goes on to production problems and eventually gets to photography, editing and actors. He gives a digest version of the films' reviews at the time of their release and ends with bits of information, which vary in pertinence. The result is an encyclopedic, if mostly prosaic, look at the films. The effect is tantamount to a reviewing of each film. Of particular interest is the chapter on *State of Siege.* Discussing, as it does, the source material for the film (CIA involvement in Latin America), the book inadvertently makes a case for the topicality of the film and its re-release would be welcome in view of the current debate over Central America. —FABRICE ZIOLKOWSKI

WEST GERMAN FILM: IN THE COURSE OF TIME

By Eric Rentschler. New York: Redgrave, 1984.

Eric Rentschler's study of West Germany's film-making "New Wave" couldn't have come along at a better time. While academic treatises armed to the teeth with the latest theoretical accoutrements threaten to reduce film analysis to so much pseudo-Lacanian wool-gathering on the one hand, mainstream critiques have become increasingly indistinguishable from studio ad copy on the other. This leaves both moviegoers and the films themselves high and dry in the middle—the factors attendant upon their multifarious interchanges largely left ignored. Historical

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The Political Fiction Film

By John J. Michalczyk. Art Alliance Press: New Jersey, 1984. $39.50.

There's almost too much information in Michalczyk's book on Costa-Gavras, the Greek-born director whose name has become synonymous with political fiction film. Still, too much is better than not enough and those interested in political cinema in general, and Costa-Gavras specifically, will find a wealth of material here.

Michalczyk starts off with a strong introduction in which he exhibits a thorough knowledge of international cinema and delves into Hollywood's occasional flirtation with the political film. Michalczyk also categorizes political films according to their aims: to inform, to call to action, to document, etc.

Of course, Costa-Gavras has been attacked by those he exposes: dictatorships, torturers, CIA operatives, etc. But criticism has also come from those who agree with his general principles while disagreeing with his methods. His films have been seen as taking a manicheistic approach to characters, ignoring complex political issues.

The form/content argument also rears its head. Many have charged, starting with *Cahiers du Cinéma* writers in the late sixties, that films such as Costa-Gavras's are no different from other Hollywood fare and can have no real political impact. It's possible to understand the vehemence of this criticism from the left as part of the search for ideological purity. But, it's also time to realize that we need a plurivocal approach to political speech: different films for different audiences, a coexistence of voices which all decry repression. Michalczyk dutifully includes Costa-Gavras's detractors and their points of view.

As in most auteurist studies, the book begins with biographical data about the director before taking a chronological approach to the films, beginning with the first feature, *The Sleeping Car Murder,* and ending with comments on *Missing.* (The book was finished before the release of *Hanna K.*) Each film is dissected along the same lines, a process which almost becomes mechanical from chapter to chapter. Michalczyk introduces the narrative, discusses the original source, then goes on to production problems and eventually gets to photography, editing and actors. He gives a digest version of the films' reviews at the time of their release and ends with bits of information, which vary in pertinence. The result is an encyclopedic, if mostly prosaic, look at the films. The effect is tantamount to a reviewing of each film. Of particular interest is the chapter on *State of Siege.* Discussing, as it does, the source material for the film (CIA involvement in Latin America), the book inadvertently makes a case for the topicality of the film and its re-release would be welcome in view of the current debate over Central America. —FABRICE ZIOLKOWSKI

WEST GERMAN FILM: IN THE COURSE OF TIME

By Eric Rentschler. New York: Redgrave, 1984.

Eric Rentschler's study of West Germany's film-making "New Wave" couldn't have come along at a better time. While academic treatises armed to the teeth with the latest theoretical accoutrements threaten to reduce film analysis to so much pseudo-Lacanian wool-gathering on the one hand, mainstream critiques have become increasingly indistinguishable from studio ad copy on the other. This leaves both moviegoers and the films themselves high and dry in the middle—the factors attendant upon their multifarious interchanges largely left ignored. Historical

specificity, Rentschler's chief analytical tool, is a surefire way of shedding a little needed light on things, and in this relatively brief (200 pages of text plus addenda) volume, critical clarity reigns supreme.

"American audiences have gazed upon a small number of stars without much sense of how they fit into the vast space from which they originate," Rentschler declares early on. Needless to say, few believe that the New German Cinema sprang full grown from the heads of Herzog, Wenders, Fassbinder, Syberberg, et al. But getting down to cases about the whys and wherefores has never been an easy task. Consider Italian neorealism, a movement attendant upon extremely specific cultural/historic circumstances. Yet through the years it's been regarded as little more than a grab bag of vaguely humanist notions circulating around a few privileged *auteurs*—rather than the bourgeois apologia for the fascist period that it actually was.[1] The French *Nouvelle Vague* has fared no better, the manifest differences between film-makers as antithetical as Godard and Truffaut continually glossed over in favor of a manufactured image of a cultural "old boy" network extending so far in some minds as to include the likes of Blier and Tavernier.[2] Rentschler will have none of this oversimplification. Tracing the movement from its official birth with the Oberhausen manifesto of 1962, to its journalistic rebirth when the films caught the fancy of New York critics (particularly Vincent Canby) in the early seventies, to a consideration of the situation as it exists today, Rentschler provides the perspective essential for proper critical scrutiny.

Destroying one critical misconception after another, Rentschler reveals the "New Wave" to be not quite as "new" as generally believed. Herzog's roots in German expressionism are fully exposed, likewise Wenders's and Schlöndorff's relation to Hollywood emigrés of a previous generation (Lubitsch and Wilder). Inextricably tied to it all are the specifically American aspects of this German film movement—to wit, the fact that it's to a large degree the invention of the American press. The way this *Autorenkino* fared on its home turf as compared to its rapturous reception "once every year at Lincoln Center" is examined in detail. Cross-cultural misreadings are dealt with in sections that examine American views of Fassbinder centering solely on style (the famous indebtedness to Douglas Sirk) with nary a word about the immediate postwar German scene that served as these films' subjects (particularly *The Merchant of Four Seasons.*) Rentschler further notes how even an (allegedly) Americanized talent like Wenders has suffered critically along similar lines—*The Wrong Move* widely criticized for embodying the German "inwardness" it is in point of fact satirizing. Additionally the alleged "freedom" of this state-supported cinema is belied by a system demanding the submission of scripts. Rentschler shows how it is for that same reason that the West German "New Wave" is largely a cinema of adaptation (Schlöndorff's *Young Törless,* Wenders's *The Scarlet Letter,* Herzog's *Woyzzeck,* Fassbinder's *Effi Briest*), literature's respectability providing the proper ideological camoflage for radical ideas, but at the expense of freer forms of expression.

While discarding the spoilt milk of the various sacred cows involved in all of this, Rentschler is most attentive to the less critically examined aspects of this film-making scene. The collectively made *Germany in Autumn* is the subject of a highly informative chapter on the political impact of the movement. Likewise such neglected *auteurs* as Alexander Kluge and Herbert Acternbusch are afforded a well deserved leg up the *cinéaste* ladder. Sadly Rentschler has little to say about Werner Schroeter, whose contextualization could perhaps best illuminate the movement's strengths and weaknesses. But this is a minor oversight in a study that is overall a triumph of lucidity and good critical sense.

—DAVID EHRENSTEIN

NOTES

1. Italian critic Mario Cannella's "Ideology and Aesthetic Hypothesis in the Criticism of Neo-Realism," *Screen,* Volume 14, Number 4, Winter 1973-74 is especially illuminating on this subject.

2. See "Les Enfants Terribles" by Michel Ciment in *American Film,* December 1984. Ciment's failure to discuss the critical differences between the *Cahiers du Cinéma* group of writers and film-makers and those of his own publication *Positif* is to say the least quite curious.

Brasch, Walter M. *Cartoon Monickers: An Insight into the Animation Industry.* Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Press, 1983. $21.95 cloth, $9.95 paper. How Bugs Bunny and the legion of other animated characters got named. —E.C.

Braudy, Leo. *The World in a Frame: What We See in Films.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984. $9.95 paperback. A reissue of this excellent 1976 book, which proposed the distinction between "open" and "closed" forms and also has a great deal of interest to say about genres and performance —bringing ideas to bear on film without being mandarin "theory." —E.C.

Brode, Douglas. *The Films of Dustin Hoffman.* Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press, 1983. *The Films of Dustin Hoffman* intimates that Hoffman's abilities as an actor are so convincing that any film he has been associated with—despite some with poor scriptwriting, production, and direction—is a powerful and important work. Books like this eulogize an actor to the detriment of getting to "know" what he is really like. Brode has obviously researched his subject. He does provide many insightful anecdotes and quotes, but it is tempting to doubt his extreme praise of Hoffman, even though he is a fine actor. —SUSAN SITKIN

Cagin, Seth, and Philip Dray. *Hollywood Films of the Seventies.* New York: Harper & Row, 1984. $9.95 paper. Cagin and Dray document how the counterculture became a significant force in the Hollywood of 1969-76. The force named "Political Hollywood" by the authors, was ". . . charting the shifting values of the counterculture as it emerged, matured and finally disintegrated, tracking even its immense and persistent influence on the mainstream." Cagin and Dray suggest their view by first tracing the roots of "Political Hollywood," which they believe were the creative and controversial, independent films of Stanley Kubrick and the youth-oriented, exploitation movies of Roger Corman's American International Pictures. The authors then study individual films of the decade, from AIP graduate Dennis Hopper's *Easy Rider* to *Taxi Driver.* They use background information, plot synopses and analyses. *Hollywood Films of the Seventies* generally succeeds at displaying how the counterculture became a dominant force in Hollywood. However, some analyses are not as comprehensive as they could have been. Also, certain genres are barely addressed at all. Yet the book, for the most part, is the best study of the period. —NEAL RENTZ

Carmines, Christine. *Celluloid Warrior.* San Francisco: Thinking Gnomes Press, 1984. $12.95 paper. This is a charmingly nutty account of the *Star Wars* films from the standpoint of Magick. The author patiently parses the characters and action of the film, and she reads them very well: sometimes her descriptions sound almost like script thumbnail sketches. And something about her approach undoubtedly does match the films. Here's a sample: "Using the Force in such a moral and philosophical vacuum is possible; however it is not respected [by 'magickians']. Behaving magickally in that sort of meglomaniacal [sic] way is considered abusive. Knowledge is being abused; innocent people are being hurt and the magickians' cultural role is being perverted for the furtherance of one person's ego." The author has studied biology, and provides an annotated bibliography. —E.C.

De Navacelle, Thierry. *Sublime Marlene.* New York: St. Martin's, 1984. $14.95. "Sublime," says de Navacelle; "nothing special," says Dietrich, about herself. The illustrations in this Kobal-picture-book tend to support him. Most of them are from her films, however, and in her films—at least in the seven which she made with Josef von Sternberg—she is sublime, whether as actress, presence or icon. The author's fascination with Dietrich dates from a 1975 viewing of *Morocco,* which is probably the closest that Dietrich ever came to playing Dietrich. (In the film, Amy Jolly's dolls are, in fact, Dietrich's.) No wonder he sees his book as an attempt to shatter the "myth that she is a cold, hard woman"—if *Morocco* tells the truth about her, she is anything but. He is, though, exactly wrong about Dietrich's appeal in her Sternberg films: it is not her intensity which astonishes, but her seeming-casualness, that coolness which suggests the presence within of feeling which is not for show. De Navacelle admits that most of Dietrich's post-Sternberg films (and Sternberg's post-Dietrich films) are of little interest. Cannily, he devotes roughly half of his book to the Sternbergs; pictorially-speaking, though, the other half is still hit-and-miss. There is a charming shot of Dietrich chatting with Hitchcock (circa 1950), and a Sternbergian portrait of her from *Seven Sinners* (1940), but the book thins after 1935 and *The Devil is a Woman.* The final photograph from that film proves, in fact, a kind of omen—it's mislabeled "the closing image" of the film, which it is not. —DON WILLIS

Desser, David. *The Samurai Films of Akira Kurosawa.* Ann Arbor: UMI Research, 1983. Desser situates Kurosawa's samurai films within the genre —or rather sub-genre—as a whole and establishes its context and connections with both Japanese and American society. (Kurosawa's mature style, as he points out, developed under the eye of the post-World War II American censors.) He then grapples with the films in turn, dealing with the critical approaches that have been taken to them by others—notably Noël Burch in *To the Distant Observer*—and gives his own close and intelligent readings of them. While Desser does not develop any startling new insights, the study will certainly prove interesting to anyone who cares about Kurosawa's films. —E.C.

Dickens, Homer. *The Films of Barbara Stanwyck.* Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1984. $19.95. Anybody who could play The Lady Eve, Sugarpuss O'Shea, and Phyllis Dietrichson is a power to reckon with. Dickens is suitably knocked out in his introductory essay; the rest is credits, synopses, critical quotes, and delicious photos. —E.C.

Fava, Claudio G. and Aldo Vigano. *The Films of Federico Fellini.* Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1985. $19.95. A highly personal essay on the author's early impressions of Fellini's films, a year-by-year biographical sketch, and credits-cast-synopsis-notes-reviews treatments of all the films. (The reviews are mostly Italian, and the notes give a succinct account of the making of each film.) Copious illustrations. —E.C.

Kael, Pauline. *5001 Nights at the Movies: A Guide from A to Z.* New York: Holt, 1985. $12.95 paper. The paper edition contains 100 new items. While these capsule summaries can't convey the full flavor of Kael's reviews, they may send you back to her earlier books—or to the nearest repertory theater. —E.C.

Fields, Ronald J. *W. C. Fields: A Life on Film.* New York: St. Martin's, 1984. $14.95. Fields, like John Ford, has the posthumous good fortune to have a devoted grandson to write about him. But Ronald Field's book is mainly comprised of lengthy synopses of the films, together with credits and brief notes on the production circumstances of each and a few sidelong references to the comedian's life. The review reactions and box-office for each film are also summarized (critics generally savaged the pictures, though they did quite well commercially, up until *It's a Gift* [1934]). A nice book for Fields fans, and pleasantly illustrated, but for a better critical treatment, see Wes Gehring's book, below. —E.C.

Gehring, Wes D. *W. C. Fields: A Bio-Bibliography.* Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1984. $29.95. Gehring has substantial critical sense and also carries out normal scholarly documentation and cross-referencing, so this book has more solidity than Ron Field's work (above). It will guide other researchers to the quite voluminous literature on Fields and to other resources for study of the great comedian. The volume also contains scraps about his character or acts from Fields himself. —E.C.

Kilborn, R. W. *Whose Lost Honour? A Study of the Film Adaptation of Böll's 'The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum.'* Scottish Papers in Germanic Studies, Vol. 4, 8 Crawford Crescent, Uddingston, Glasgow G71 7DP, 2.45. A brief and pedantic but well organized study. —E.C.

MacKinnon, Kenneth. *Hollywood's Small Towns: An Introduction to the American Small-Town Movie.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1984. $16.50. MacKinnon attempts to establish a new "genre," which he maintains cross-cuts a variety of others, but the bulk of the book is a series of essays on individual films, from *Peyton Place* to *Carrie.* —E.C.

McFarlane, Brian. *Words and Images: Australian Novels into Film.* London: Secker & Warburg, 1984. £7.95. Intelligent critical essays on *Picnic at Hanging Rock, The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith, My Brilliant Career, The Year of Living Dangerously,* and half a dozen others. —E.C.

Meyers, Richard, Amy Harlib, Bill and Karen Palmer. *Martial Arts Movies from Bruce Lee to the Ninjas.* Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1985. $19.95. There are Americans as well as Asians for whom martial arts movies are the last refuge of True Cinema—where the sheer beauty of the moving image can be its own reward, though the choreographed fights that climax the films are generally set in a story of impeccable moral content. The authors of this history of the genre are dedicated fans who have researched the sometimes obscure corners of the industry from which not only Bruce Lee but other stars of martial arts films arose. Kurosawa figures in the story (beginning with his *Judo Saga,* 1945) and so do a legion of unknown directors and performers, some of them highly talented in kung fu or in acting, and a few in both. This will be a fine guide to anybody who has the sneaking suspicion that some of these films just might be *good.* —E.C.

Modleski, Tania. *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women.* New York: Methuen, 1984. $6.95 (paper). This highly original collection of essays is now available in paper. —E.C.

Morley, Margaret, ed. *The Films of Laurence Olivier.* Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press, 1984. $9.95 paperback. Credits, synopses, and critical snippets, plus lots of stills, and chapters on Olivier's career by Dilys Powell, Roger Manvell, and Tom Hutchinson, as well as editor Morley. —E.C.

Park, James. *Learning to Dream: The New British Cinema.* Boston: Faber & Faber, 1984. $7.95 paper. "The history of British cinema has been one of unparalleled mediocrity," begins Park. And British TV, admirable thought it may seem to culturally deprived Americans, is dramatic rather than cinematic. Park traces the available routes into the industry, the nature of the current shrunken film audience, how TV and other money sources affect film-making prospects, etc. He then surveys a group of promising talents: some relatively commercial like Roland Joffe, Bill Forsyth, Neil Jordan, and Michael Radford, some less so like Peter Greenaway, Chris Petit, Marek Kanievska and others, but none of them much interested in tradi-

tional "British realism." —E.C.

Peary, Danny, ed. *Omni's Screen Flights/Screen Fantasies: The Future According to Science Fiction Cinema.* New York: Doubleday/Dolphin, 1984. $17.95. This rather random compendium of essays and interviews on the science fiction film has the primary distinction of focusing on the more *outré* element of the genre, to a point where the popular genre contributions of recent years (*Star Wars, E.T.,* etc.) are almost totally overlooked. The strategy behind this omission seems sensible: science fiction at its best has focused on transformations of society and of human consciousness, concepts largely missing from the sentimentalism and space opera pyrotechnics of the Spielberg-Lucas variety. Among the more useful articles are David Thomson's piece on sexuality in science fiction; Martin Sutton's essay on *Forbidden Planet;* director George Miller's extensive comments on his *Mad Max* and *The Road Warrior* (especially important are his remarks on homosexuality as a theme in these films); Philip Strick's discussion of the importance of the urban landscape to science fiction; and Robert C. Cumbow's article on the genre's recurring Prometheus figure. With such especially provocative and insightful essays as Jerry Stahl's "*Cafe Flesh* Midnight Hit for a Pornographic Age," it is bewildering why the work of David Cronenberg should receive only tangential comment, since his films seem suited to the book's editorial premises. These premises are largely defined by Harlan Ellison's introductory essay, which, despite its annoyingly grandstanding prose, pinpoints the genre's current dilemma, viz., its domination by "film school graduates . . . utterly unfamiliar with the concept of plagiarism [who have] perpetuated the worst aspects of cinematic sophorism by paying *hommage* to the idiocies of the Fifties." This of course refers to the Spielberg-Lucas situation. In re-emphasizing the extrapolative function of science fiction (and in giving proper acknowledgement to such contemporary masterpieces as *Blade Runner* and *The Road Warrior*), the book tacitly decries the nostalgic, empty-headed, and basically reactionary tendencies of the genre at the hands of the new Hollywood whiz-kids.
—CHRISTOPHER SHARRETT

Perry, George. *The Life of Python.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1984. $9.95 paperback. There is already a Theory volume on the Pythons (courtesy of the BFI) and here is their History. Perry tracks them back to their Oxford and Cambridge days, dissociates their tangled contributions, summarizes their marital histories and present living quarters, and contributes many wry and totally unsystematic comments on their works and working methods. He also quotes extensively from their nutty remarks in interviews. The book is loaded with pictures and includes a filmography. It will delight fans and probably cause symptoms ranging from unease to nausea in others. —E.C.

Pfaff, Françoise. *The Cinema of Ousmane Sembene, A Pioneer of African Film.* Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1984. $27.95. This is a very careful examination of the situation in which Sembene works, and of all his films to date. Pfaff is strongest on explaining the ramifications of Sembene's stories in the complexities of Senegal's Muslim-with-French-colonial-overlay culture; she makes interesting observations about the variations in style that characterize Sembene's rural vs. urban films. She isolates the wry kind of satirical humor that distinguishes his films into a special section, so that it doesn't figure in the analyses of individual films. Still, this is a thoroughly researched appreciation of the films of the most important director yet to emerge from the African continent, and a significant contribution to the growing literature on Third World cinema. —E.C.

Ringold, Gene. *Bette Davis: Her Films and Her Career.* Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1985. $19.95. This new edition adds an "aftermath" chapter on the years 1965–1985 (not one of Davis's better periods). A standard survey of the films, with credits, synopses, critical snippets, and lots of stills. —E.C.

Selby, Spencer. *Dark City: The Film Noir.* McFarland & Co., Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640, 1984. $18.95. Short essays, emphasizing motive and ignoring visuals, follow plot summaries of twenty-five films. 490 titles follow with credits and one-sentence summaries. A sparse appendix notes "Off-Genre" and "Other Films Noirs." What makes a "Postnoir"? Why is *Pursued* (Walsh) an off-genre Western and not *Colorado Territory* (same script as *High Sierra,* same director)? —JOHN FELL

Skvorecky, Josef. *Jiri Menzel and the History of the Closely Watched Trains.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1982. The witty author of *All the Bright Young Men and Woman* gives us the background, evolution and upshot on Menzel's film, with grimly sophisticated observations on the post-Spring situation of Czech cinema. —E.C.

Slide, Anthony. *Selected Film Criticism: Foreign Films 1930–1950.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1984. $17.50. A continuation of Slide's resuscitation project on critical reviews from a variety of mainly little known or inaccessible periodicals, notably *Rob Wagner's Script.* —E.C.

St. Charnez, Casey. *The Films of Steve McQueen.* Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1984. $19.95. Heavily illustrated and with the usual credits and review quotes, this is mainly a biography of the highest-paid actor of his time, whose films were often unkindly treated by critics but loved by audiences. —E.C.

Toles, George E., ed. *Film/Literature* (special issue of *Mosaic*). Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1983. Excellent, thoughtful essays by James Naremore (on Cagney), Garrett Stewart (on death

scenes), Tag Gallagher (on family in film), Peter Harcourt (on Truffaut), Truffaut himself (on *Antoine et orpheline*), Robin Wood (on Dracula), and a variety of others. —E.C.

Tuska, Jon. *Dark Cinema: American Film Noir in Cultural Perspective.* Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1984. $29.95. By "cultural perspective" Tuska means something more than mere pop culture: he begins with a learned excursion into Greek ideas of tragedy and some remarks on Shakespeare. We are then ready for Tuska's well established area of expertise, the hard-boiled detective novel: Hammett, Chandler, *Black Mask* writers, Ambler, Woolrich, Cain. It's refreshing to hit, in the middle of a discussion of *You Play the Black and the Red Comes Up,* a quote (in Latin) from Seneca; that's the way the man's mind works. And from there we get into the German Expressionist cinematic roots of *noir,* then a survey of the gangster cycle, and finally into an extended analysis of the films, their typical (or not so typical) characters, and their themes—with flashes back to the Greeks with whom we began. This is an original and thought-provoking book which should intrigue anybody interested in the genre—even if it really isn't one, a thought Tuska entertains without allowing it to spoil his fun. —E.C.

Umphlett, Wiley Lee. *The Movies Go to College: Hollywood and the World of the College-Life Film.* Cranbury, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984. $27.50. Another attempt to establish a doubtful genre—surveying college-life movies from the twenties to *Animal House.* —E.C.

Walker, Alexander. *Dietrich.* New York: Harper & Row, 1984. $29.95. Thierry de Navacelle's Dietrich (*Sublime Marlene*) is "hot"; Alexander Walker's is "cool," disciplined. Walker sees her as a sort of Soldier of Life, bravely carrying on through wartime and peacetime, onscreen and off. He perhaps overstresses the military aspect of her persona: she is "mother, lover and honorary colonel to the ranks of fighting men." He seems to be taking a part of her for the whole. But, while the de Navacelle book has an apparent edge in number and quality of stills, Walker's text is "meatier"—better-written, smoother as "story," more richly supplemented with anecdotes and quotes from commentary, then and now, on the woman and her films. (Walker includes a very funny excerpt from a 1931 Leonard Hall satire of *Hausfrau* Dietrich: "I am happiest among my kiddie. Also among my hubby and my book.") And he actually saw some of her obscure German silents. In the photos from them, Dietrich is virtually unrecognizable, "Americanized," unresonant—it was left to Josef von Sternberg to isolate and reveal her uniqueness. Walker sees the Sternberg-Dietrich films as direct expressions of their real-life relationship. He's a little too literal. A moment such as Warner Oland's business with the grape pip, in *Dishonored* (1931), would seem to owe more to some weird comic-cosmic esthetic than to autobiography: Oland, in a nod towards etiquette, at first glances around his room for an ashtray, then, failing to find a receptacle, simply flicks the pip away. Seconds later, he shoots himself. So much for Emily Post. —DON WILLIS

Zinman, David. *Fifty Classic Motion Pictures.* New York: Chelsea House, 1983. The text accompanying Zinman's *Fifty Classic Motion Pictures* is romantically thorough. Though the book makes a good coffee table addition, it is not intensive enough for serious film critics. —SUSAN SITKIN

History

FILM HISTORY
Theory and Practice

Robert C. Allen and Douglas Gomery. New York: Knopf, 1985.

With such an introduction to film historiography, Knopf affixes an imprimatur on the academicization of film studies. The subtitle's "Practice" encourages students and teachers to undertake personal research projects, writing new film history about local production, exhibition and attendance patterns.

To these tasks, Allen and Gomery bring sophistications untypical of past film "history" generations. The authors are sustained by methodological rigors of traditional scholarship, a matter of more than passing sociological interest. It suggests (1) that the training was nurtured in disciplinary graduate seminars outside film (History, American Studies, Rhetoric, Economics, Sociology), and (2) that this experience encourages readjustment of earlier visions, drawing away from an urge to "understand" or "appreciate" movies, to pursue aesthetic and moral consequences in the film-viewing experience. Moral concerns are displaced to the society. The image becomes artifact.

Earlier inclinations were themselves products of art criticism, literary criticism, journalism and the voices of now-aging film teachers domiciled in Art, Drama, English, Education, French and Speech programs. These are the last teachers who remember large numbers of the movies in the film history survey books. Allen and Gomery categorize antecedent his-

scenes), Tag Gallagher (on family in film), Peter Harcourt (on Truffaut), Truffaut himself (on *Antoine et orpheline*), Robin Wood (on Dracula), and a variety of others. —E.C.

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Robert C. Allen and Douglas Gomery. New York: Knopf, 1985.

With such an introduction to film historiography, Knopf affixes an imprimatur on the academicization of film studies. The subtitle's "Practice" encourages students and teachers to undertake personal research projects, writing new film history about local production, exhibition and attendance patterns.

To these tasks, Allen and Gomery bring sophistications untypical of past film "history" generations. The authors are sustained by methodological rigors of traditional scholarship, a matter of more than passing sociological interest. It suggests (1) that the training was nurtured in disciplinary graduate seminars outside film (History, American Studies, Rhetoric, Economics, Sociology), and (2) that this experience encourages readjustment of earlier visions, drawing away from an urge to "understand" or "appreciate" movies, to pursue aesthetic and moral consequences in the film-viewing experience. Moral concerns are displaced to the society. The image becomes artifact.

Earlier inclinations were themselves products of art criticism, literary criticism, journalism and the voices of now-aging film teachers domiciled in Art, Drama, English, Education, French and Speech programs. These are the last teachers who remember large numbers of the movies in the film history survey books. Allen and Gomery categorize antecedent his-

tory, manifested in survey texts, as Aesthetic. They equate it with a Masterpiece Tradition. One studied John Ford, not Johnny Mack Brown; Jean Renoir, not Jean Grémillon, just as one considered Géricault before Biard, although both painted the Wreck of the Medusa, or William Butler Yeats before Marie Corelli, although both dealt with spiritualism.

By and large, the architecture of the Globe Theater is thought to be relevant today to the extent that it facilitates clearer understandings of Shakespearean performance, and by extension, of the plays' designs. In contrast, the architecture of nickelodeons, twenties movie palaces, fifties drive-ins and seventies shopping-mall movie boxes is useful as it enlarges our knowledge about economic and social forces that channeled tides of film distribution and exploitation. Today's historical essays draw increasingly on bodies of information outside the provinces of film texts themselves or even the circumstances of production: court records, business directories, fire insurance maps, subway routes, tax records. As perceived by Allen and Gomery, films are but an element of film history; depending on the methodology enlisted, they are even incidental. A moment in history is an incredibly complex junction of intersecting forces. The kind of history pursued will define the sorts of forces under investigation. The forces are susceptible to our understanding, and they are the proper subject of Film History. In a sense, Allen and Gomery replace the Comolli-Narboni Cinematic Apparatus with a broader, less ideologically inflected Realist approach, Realism comprising an historical method that assumes an overlay of causal mechanisms subject to identification, testing, and the assignment of relative significances.

With appropriate reservations, the authors examine the character of and precedents to film history, then separately consider aesthetic, technological, economic and social approaches. Each section comprises an overview, with utilitarian considerations then held up to potential charges of reductionism. A case study follows in example. The one for aesthetic history, for instance, in "The Background of *Sunrise,*" which discusses Murnau's film for 14 pages with no mention of the film itself but for a reference to the forced-perspective sets and to the trolley ride.

In answer, Allen (the chapter's author) might emphasize that his subject was the *background* of *Sunrise.* Nevertheless he does appear to bypass those issues of style, auteurism and semiotics which preceded, in the chapter, the better to underline how extra-film matters can be used to contextualize our responses to a movie. A pre-screening classroom lecture with discussion to follow.

Clearly, the authors' hearts are given to economic and social methods, although they maintain a judicious posture of neutrality. Sections on semiotics (in the aesthetic chapter) and psychoanalysis (social) are somewhat skimpy, although the problem of relative attention (pages per subject) is a matter of regular and apparent concern. It underscores the obvious: this book is itself a survey with all of a survey's self-imposed limitations.

Technological history concludes on a case study summary of Gomery's excellent investigation of sound's advent among the studios. (This was his doctoral dissertation; Allen's, on vaudeville and film, contributes to his case study on the first American film historians). Economic history balances Marxist and industrial analysis theory. Social history looks at industrial analysis theory. Social history looks at attendance patterns, image studies (women, blacks), Kracauer as a figure said to influence and to be influenced by the Frankfort School (p. 161), content analysis, and psychoanalysis. The case study analyzes Joan Crawford in terms of Richard Dyer's book *Stars.* A culminating chapter applies Realism as historical method to the Drew-Leacock-Pennebaker version of *cinéma vérité.* A Selective Guide to Reading partially evaluates and annotates film history resources.

So ambitious an undertaking is naturally vulnerable to disagreement. If semiotics is included (and described as "an aesthetic theory to film," p. 76), why not other structural studies including research on narrative such as Seymour Chatman's? And why not some of the traditional historian's refutations of Metz's confidence toward expository conventions? Why Metz but not Kuntzel, Bellour, Brewster *et al.*? Why is Barry Salt's work ignored in both formal and content analysis sections? (He's cited in the reading guide, but the reading guide isn't indexed). Where is the work of *Camera Obscura*? In a consideration of his-

toriography, why is Hayden White neglected? In a chapter devoted to the TimeLife Drew documentaries, why is there no mention of each film's dramatic rationale: one or more figures who face a test or challenge, the outcome unknown? (*Primary* also encountered exceptional synching problems in editing, an undiscussed aspect of technological history). Many things are absent, but nevertheless, most of what is here is exemplary and its motives commendable.

Another case study might apply the methods of *Film History* to film history in the trenches:

Aesthetic. What is viewed is a function of what can be afforded, itself a consequence of copyrights, vagaries of availability, distributor greed, room size (TV monitors), and the relation of a course to enrollment and to curricular function. A canon of film titles may reflect not Masterpieces, but recent articles the instructor has read or is writing.

Technology. The quality of a classroom-projected image exists in inverse proportion to the generation of the print (see Aesthetic), the inattention of the projectionist, the decrepitude of the projector, and the gauge. The character of the experience is further a function of air conditioning and the design of classroom seats, factors unique to schoolrooms.

Economic. The availability of assistants and the generosity of budget allocations is a function of the politics of class size (see Social).

Social. The quality of the instruction is a result of complex interactions among the instructor's experience and overload, enrollment, and the heterogeneity of student population, itself a consequence of culture (the seventies, the eighties), time schedule, and departmental reputation.

Text. The character of assigned reading is defined by the experience of instructors and their teaching strategies (indignation, advocacy), class size (library assignments), and socio-economic circumstance (the availability of used texts).

Film History appears to be intended both to supplement survey texts and to support historiography as a matter of serious attention in film programs. Preferably both. It will be interesting to see what happens.

—JOHN FELL

LAUGHTER THROUGH TEARS
The Yiddish Cinema

By Judith N. Goldberg. East Brunswick, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1984.

Like the Yiddish films which are the subject of her book, Judith N. Goldberg's *Laughter Through Tears* is a charming little work, flawed in many ways, but ultimately quite likeable. The book deals with the 130-odd Yiddish-language films produced in both Europe and America. The majority of these works are sound films made during the thirties, but there are also a few silent works with Yiddish inter-titles. On the whole, American-Yiddish cinema constitutes a body of artistically naive works, made on a shoestring budget by second- and third-rate film-makers. Their European counterparts are generally superior. In their day these films were kept alive by Jews proud to see their minority culture validated on the screen or anxious to keep in touch with a world quickly being assimilated. Today they have found new audiences whose responses emanate from a nostalgia for a bygone era, a passing interest in ethnic roots and a more scholarly concern for the sociology of Yiddish culture.

Goldberg has organized her material chronologically, subdivided by country—America, Poland and the Soviet Union. The structure allows for treating the films within an historical context which documents the situation of Jews during differing eras of this century. She provides good information about the Yiddish film industry, with specific details on film-makers, actors, and the production and reception of individual works. The strength of the book lies in this background material.

Where Goldberg fails is in the presentation of the films. Brief summaries are provided, but analysis is weak or nonexistent. This is especially regrettable when the films, although often lacking in artistic sophistication, are on the other hand rich in religious, moral and sociological signification. And certainly the more ambitious works such as the four features by Edgar G. Ulmer, the Polish version of *The Dybbuk,* and the screen adaptations of Sholom Aleichem's *Tevya* and Jacob Gordin's *Mirele Efros* deserve full critiques.

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Further, little material is given on the immigrant culture or aspects of Yiddishkeit from which these works emerged. Perhaps Goldberg felt that Irving Howe had said it all in *The World of Our Fathers,* but for readers unfamiliar with other available texts, this is a major deficiency; without knowledge, for instance, of the Jewish involvement with radical politics and unionizing, *Uncle Moses* (based on a novel by Sholem Asch) and even the flawed *Motel, the Operator,* lose their significance. In view of Hollywood's reluctance to treat these matters, Yiddish cinema offered another perspective on American history.

Laughter Through Tears is the first book on Yiddish films. A more recent work, Eric A. Goldman's *Visions, Images, and Dreams: Yiddish Film Past and Present,* has subsequently appeared. Together, these materials are bound to draw attention to this newly rediscovered cinema which is winning new audiences yearly. (MoMa is planning a retrospective of Yiddish film for the near future). I am delighted that the work has appeared, but saddened that Goldberg never brings the works alive nor convinces readers why they should make an effort to catch the next showing. —PATRICIA ERENS

A METHOD TO THEIR MADNESS: The History of the Actor's Studio

By Foster Hirsch. New York: Norton, 1984. $18.95.

Ostensibly a history of the Actor's Studio, Foster Hirsch's book covers a very broad range of materials, including the Moscow Art Theater's 1898 staging of *The Sea Gull,* the Group Theater productions of Clifford Odets, the heyday of Method acting in fifties Hollywood, and Robert De Niro's portrayal of Jake LaMotta in *Raging Bull.* In fact one of Hirsh's problems is that many of the celebrated performances he describes can be related to the Studio only very loosely if at all. The potentially more important subject here—blurred by emphasis on a single institution—is the influence of Stanislavski on American theater and movies.

True, the Actor's Studio had a role in shaping and sustaining a Stanislavskian technique, but its formative work occupied only one phase in the history of this country's devotion to expressive-realist acting, and its achievements are difficult to substantiate. Established in 1947 by Elia Kazan and Cheryl Crawford, it produced no especially significant theater, it offered no coherent theory of acting, and its reputation as a training ground for professional players has been somewhat exaggerated. Two of its most famous "pupils"—Marlon Brando and Marilyn Monroe—can hardly qualify. Brando was trained by Stella Adler at Erwin Piscator's Dramatic Workshop, and Monroe did little more than attend a few sessions at the Studio, where she sat in the back row and unwittingly helped Lee Strasberg become famous. (Hirsch acknowledges these facts, but then goes on to discuss both Brando and Monroe in a section entitled "The Actor's Studio on Stage and Film.")

This is not to deny certain virtues of Hirsch's study. He has written an engaging account of how the Method contributed to the sociolect of New York acting, and his research into the Studio itself is quite thorough. In addition to archival materials, he draws upon experience as a theatergoer, interviews with countless actors, and personal observation of the Studio's working sessions. He is good at showing the financial structure of the organization, the nature of its teaching, the maneuvers for power within its hierarchy, and the grinding contradictions of Lee Strasberg's career. Although his viewpoint is highly sympathetic, he recognizes many Studio failings, and he quotes freely from its detractors. Reporting on its recent activity, he gives balanced portraits of famous "moderators," and offers pointed comments on the inadequacy of Method teaching for certain types of drama.

As historical interpretation and critical analysis, however, *A Method to Their Madness* is disappointing. Hirsch contends that the Studio's "exploration of psychological realism" has "perennial value," but this claim cannot be justified by the evidence. Lee Strasberg's rather woolly-brained romanticism, his emphasis on ego psychology instead of training for the voice and body, his obvious courting of celebrities under the guise of philosopher and therapist—all these things were retrograde developments in a conservative but more thea-

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trically effective tradition associated with Stanislavski. Actually, the Master's own "theory" was little more than a distillation of commonplaces that have governed Western theater since the seventeenth century, combined with new techniques adapted from behaviorist psychology; unlike Strasberg, however, Stanislavski was a brilliant director who codified methods of naturalist performance, and who exerted a clear influence on generations of directors after him.

Where film itself is concerned, we can speak of an intuitive Method at work long before there was an Actor's Studio. Consider the affinities between Stanislavski and Griffith: both were part of a generalized turn-of-the-century attempt to make proscenium framing and blocking seem less artificial; both were interested in a "subtext" of intimate, emotionally charged acting; and both were attracted to a mixture of "local color" and melodrama (one of Stanislavski's favorite plays was *The Two Orphans*). At a more specific level, Pudovkin's treatise on film acting, written in the thirties and reflective of mainstream thinking in both the Soviet Union and the United States, tends to quote Stanislavski at every possible opportunity. Hence there was a good deal of truth behind Lee Strasberg's well-known remark that Gary Cooper resembled a Method actor. As Hirsch notes, Strasberg later qualified his statement in order to appease thespians who did not want to be equated with movie stars; but isn't Hollywood the place above all others where actors have perfected the art of playing "themselves"?

There was of course a second, more "educated" wave of naturalist influence on movies *via* New York theater, especially in the films of Brando and Elia Kazan, whom Hirsch righty praises. During this phase, however, Brando was far more important than anyone directly associated with the Actor's Studio. In the rather parochial teaching of Strasberg, Stanislavski's techniques were narrowed down to "inner work" on the actor, fueled by an excessive and very American obsession with the "self." Strasberg claimed to be working outside the theatrical event, uncovering the "essence" of the actor's personality; and yet his Studio sessions were themselves performances, highly theatricalized Encounters played out in front of a coterie audience, with Strasberg taking on the role of analyst. They helped make him a cult figure (Hirsch is excellent at showing the sources of his power and the psychological dynamic behind his "presentation of self"), but a case could be made that they impoverished the theater—limiting the actor's work, promoting bourgeois realism at the expense of the avant garde, and giving American drama a less forceful social purpose.

In this regard, Hirsch needs to distinguish more sharply between the teachings of the Studio and the work of the earlier Group Theater, which mixed conventionally realistic plays such as *The House of Connelly* with agitational, semi-Brechtian productions of *1931, Waiting for Lefty,* and *Johnny Johnson* (the last directed by Strasberg). Hirsch dislikes Brecht, and he thinks Meyerhold was a "theatrical knight-errant jousting at windmills"; he therefore gives the Strasberg Method a privileged status, overstating its social significance and undervaluing most performances in the alternative, comic/modernist/deconstructive tradition. Perhaps for that reason, I found his description of the work he witnessed in the Studio somewhat depressing. The jargon he quotes with uncritical acceptance has a familiar ring: "private moment," "truth," "freedom," "naturalness," "organic"—these are the keywords of romantic idealism, naively employed by contemporary actors who seem stuck in the fifties.

Hirsch's book becomes more lively in the closing chapters, when he surveys Method influence on postwar theater and cinema. He is good at invoking the mannerisms of individual players, although much of what he says is brief and familiar. His survey also seems overbalanced in favor of male performance; Marilyn Monroe is almost the only woman who is discussed in detail. In a chapter on "The Anti-Heroine," Hirsch argues that Hollywood in the fifties was reluctant to cast women who were "intense and idiosyncratic," and then he devotes six or seven pages to the relatively minor work of Julie Harris, Kim Stanley, Sandy Dennis, and Geraldine Page. This is an odd strategy, because the same logic he uses to identify a Method style in men could have been extended to Faye Dunaway (*Bonnie and Clyde, Network*), Jane Fonda (*Julia, Coming Home*), and Diane Keaton (*Looking for Mr. Goodbar, Reds*). These three are as good as

James Dean at using "affective memory" to convey a neurotic subtext, and each of them has been exposed to Actor's Studio teaching.

Given the somewhat diffuse range of Hirsch's undertaking, it is perhaps inevitable that he cannot include everything. But if he skips certain names, if he makes the Actor's Studio seem too important in some ways or not important enough in others, his book remains a helpful reference; at least he provides a sense of the Studio's origins, practice, and continued effect on mainstream performance. Whether or not one agrees with his judgments, it is useful to have this glimpse into an institution which, for over three decades, has prepared so many American actors.

—JAMES NAREMORE

EIGHT HOURS FOR WHAT WE WILL Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City

by Roy Rosenzweig. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Eight Hours is a consistently illuminating study of working-class leisure in Worchester, Massachussetts. Several different areas of working-class life are examined: the celebration of July 4th, the development of parks and playgrounds and the saloon. In his chapter "From Rum Shop to Rialto," Rosenzweig also looks at the cinema, suggesting it became a saloon substitute, particularly during the prohibition era. Considering the dialectical relations between work and play in 19th and early 20th century America, the author uses a Marxist method in a subtle, exemplary manner. He has produced a work that is indispensable for those wishing to situate silent American cinema within a broader socio-economic context.

Rosenzweig's chapter on the cinema offers an informative exhibition history of Worchester, combining excellent primary research with a fine knowledge of the pertinent historiography. Establishing the working-class background of several Worchester nickelodeon owners, Rosenzweig concludes that "Together the immigrant working-class management and the immigrant working-class audiences developed a style of moviegoing that accorded with and drew upon earlier modes of public working-class recreation (p. 199)." The extent to which these exhibitors' backgrounds are typical needs to be established in similar studies. Even if, as I suspect, their working-class background is only shared with a small minority of exhibitors, Rosenzweig's inquiry raises important issues which film historians have generally ignored.

Unfortunately, Rosenzweig argues that "it may be more fruitful to focus on the moviegoing experience rather than movie content." Yet this is precisely where the saloon and the movie-house differ. How alcohol is consumed may be much more important than the kind of alcohol it happens to be, but this is not true with movies. Although Rosenzweig briefly suggests ways in which films influenced audiences, his analyses are not detailed and seem the most problematic part of his book. He speculates that "workers who had spent their time in the movie theater in the 1920's might find their way to the union halls in the 1930's and 1940's, as they sought to achieve what the movies promised but the larger society failed to deliver." Yet films which week after week celebrated essentially middle-class values encouraged the working-class to acquire those goods by moving into the middle-class not by labor militancy. Rosenzweig would seem to imply that working-class viewers retained some critical perspective which enabled them to resist this ideology, but he never explains what this resistance entailed. It is equally possible that the unionization of America's working-class may have happened despite the movies. Although the nature and extent of cinema's impact on the American working class needs to be discussed, the dialectical interplay between how films were seen and what was seen remains crucial to an analysis of this question. —CHARLES MUSSER

FILM STYLE AND TECHNOLOGY: HISTORY AND ANALYSIS

By Barry Salt. Starword, 3 Minford Gardens, London W14 OAN, England, 1985. $33.00.

Barry Salt is the inventor of statistical style analysis, a way of quantitatively comparing films or groups of films in respect to their average scale of shot (long shot, medium shot, close-up, etc.), average shot duration, camera

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Rosenzweig's chapter on the cinema offers an informative exhibition history of Worchester, combining excellent primary research with a fine knowledge of the pertinent historiography. Establishing the working-class background of several Worchester nickelodeon owners, Rosenzweig concludes that "Together the immigrant working-class management and the immigrant working-class audiences developed a style of moviegoing that accorded with and drew upon earlier modes of public working-class recreation (p. 199)." The extent to which these exhibitors' backgrounds are typical needs to be established in similar studies. Even if, as I suspect, their working-class background is only shared with a small minority of exhibitors, Rosenzweig's inquiry raises important issues which film historians have generally ignored.

Unfortunately, Rosenzweig argues that "it may be more fruitful to focus on the moviegoing experience rather than movie content." Yet this is precisely where the saloon and the movie-house differ. How alcohol is consumed may be much more important than the kind of alcohol it happens to be, but this is not true with movies. Although Rosenzweig briefly suggests ways in which films influenced audiences, his analyses are not detailed and seem the most problematic part of his book. He speculates that "workers who had spent their time in the movie theater in the 1920's might find their way to the union halls in the 1930's and 1940's, as they sought to achieve what the movies promised but the larger society failed to deliver." Yet films which week after week celebrated essentially middle-class values encouraged the working-class to acquire those goods by moving into the middle-class not by labor militancy. Rosenzweig would seem to imply that working-class viewers retained some critical perspective which enabled them to resist this ideology, but he never explains what this resistance entailed. It is equally possible that the unionization of America's working-class may have happened despite the movies. Although the nature and extent of cinema's impact on the American working class needs to be discussed, the dialectical interplay between how films were seen and what was seen remains crucial to an analysis of this question. —CHARLES MUSSER

FILM STYLE AND TECHNOLOGY: HISTORY AND ANALYSIS

By Barry Salt. Starword, 3 Minford Gardens, London W14 OAN, England, 1985. $33.00.

Barry Salt is the inventor of statistical style analysis, a way of quantitatively comparing films or groups of films in respect to their average scale of shot (long shot, medium shot, close-up, etc.), average shot duration, camera

movements, and other features. This technique parallels methods of literary analysis devised by Josephine Miles and others to study poetic usages. Over the years since his work first began appearing in this journal, Salt has applied his technique to a very large number of films (and film-makers) with suggestive results for film criticism and "theory." He has now gathered and expanded this work into a book, adding to it a parallel line of work (much of it also first published in these pages) concerned with film style and technology, in which he traces the effects of developments in film stock, lighting equipment, dollies and other shooting equipment, and editing machinery and practices.

Because of the capital importance of this research and its significance for film history and criticism (not to mention its sheer novelty) I rank Salt's book as one of the most important to have been published in the field in recent years. He has given us a method for generating and checking reliable modest generalizations about a director or era's style; he has greatly deepened our understanding of how technical factors influence the final images that cameramen, directors, and editors put before us. His dogged adherence to historical reality is a badly needed corrective to the flights of interpretive fantasy which many writers about film are prone to.

It is hardly possible to exaggerate the great gulf between Salt's quantitative style analysis and most film writing, but its extent can be suggested by the fact that since Salt's work began appearing, now a decade ago, nobody has done what is normal and essential in scientific work: attempt to replicate Salt's results. One reason replication is routine in science is that an experiment as performed in one laboratory may contain unnoticed features which, when another lab attempts the same work, may produce differing results, bringing the original findings into question and showing the need for further experimentation and perhaps new thinking. Until this repetition is carried out, results are regarded as tentative. Replication is also essential because, among scientists as among other humans, a few people cheat. (One famous recent case involved a biologist who, when certain skin grafts did not "take" on his mice, began using India ink to simulate them.)

Thus, if there were people in the film field who actually believed in a scientific approach to film, some of them would have immediately taken some of the films counted by Salt and repeated his work to see if the method worked in other hands. As Salt points out, this is much less entertaining than sitting in an armchair developing grandiose notions, but if we seriously proposed to achieve verifiable propositions about films—and most especially groups of films—it is a necessity. But such replication did not happen; film studies have happily proceeded along the same humanistic lines as before—enjoyably impressionist and sometimes, as Salt is good at showing, wildly off-base historically. The fact that film people are on the whole not much interested in verifiable propositions does not greatly disturb me, but it is one of the things that has made Barry Salt a bitter man.

Salt was once a physicist and he has made some films himself. He possesses a great and in my opinion generally justified faith in scientific method, whose achievements he is quick to cite. The great bulk of his book deploys the kind of concrete observation customary in art history for the description and analysis of film style from the beginnings through the sixties. So much richness does Salt offer us about lighting practices, shooting techniques and the like that nobody henceforth should dare to set pen to paper about a film of, say, the 1914–1919 period without thoroughly digesting what Salt has to say about the norms and tendencies of that period; this will obviate the common error of assuming that something in a given film is remarkable when in fact it may be a widespread practice of the time. (This applies, for instance, to what now seem to us eye-line "mismatches" in European films of the twenties.)

Salt occasionally slips into a kind of oversimple technological determinism. He writes, for instance, that "*as a result of* the freedom provided by" the advent of edge-numbering, average shot length started to decrease (p. 281; emphasis mine). This is, however, a minor lapse, since he immediately gets into the actual context in which this new aspect of technology was used: it was at Warners that it was especially taken advantage of, though some Warner directors' work showed no such effect. And Salt subsequently notes that later

in the thirties a new tendency toward longer shots began—presumably without a technological impetus. Elsewhere, Salt is sometimes concerned to bring into his story larger cultural patterns (from trends in still photography, for example) that helped shape movie trends. In this case he confines himself to demonstrating that although many directors were apparently not involved in the cutting of their films, except as they could influence this through the length of their takes, some could counteract studio tendencies effectively. Thus when Hawks and Wyler made films at Warners, *Ceiling Zero* had an ASL of 12 seconds and *The Letter* an ASL of 18 seconds, though Curtiz's work at this time was down at 6–7 seconds, and other Warner directors stayed under 10. Such things are certainly of considerable interest to any auteurist or anti-auteurist.

Anyone contemplating hazardous generalizations about shot-reverse shot (or reverse-angle) cutting, "sutures," and the like would be particularly wise to read Salt on the evolution of this figure, which began with Ince, was not relied upon by Griffith, and has shown a great diversity of application ever since. (Having said this much, Salt then undermines his own case with an inane application of "scientific psychology" to the effect that such cutting works because we like variety—not too much but not too little—and that we react intensely to front-on faces because of our neurological wiring, and that this explains everything quite satisfactorily.)

It remains to be seen whether Salt's general method will prove of much value in direct application to critical work, though it should certainly have a salutary cautionary effect, reining in unsound generalizing. To suggest how his approach might work in critical practice, his last chapter applies his techniques to the films of Max Ophuls. A good bit of this is fairly dry stuff. "At one point [in *La Ronde*] there is a string of 15 consecutive Close Ups, which is the sort of thing that just did not happen in other people's films in the sound period . . . it should also be added that only 18 of the 294 shots in *La Ronde* contain large changes of scale within their length. . . ." Coming to *Lola Montès,* which he loathes, Salt notes Ophuls's commercially dangerous course of using very long takes from far back; he then rather charmingly launches into a tirade against Martine Carol's lack of talent, the mechanical alternation of identical reverse-angles, the miserable dialogue, and Ophuls's curiously timid use of the new 'Scope frame. A typical judgment based on the Salt method is something like: "The second half of *Lola Montès* is devoted to her liaison with the King of Bohemia, and here all the scenes are protracted far beyond what their substance will bear, mostly without any compensating visual interest whatever being applied." (p. 374) Since Ophuls's flaws are to a considerable extent "original," however, he still gets good marks on Salt's primary criterion of value. On the second, influence upon other film-makers, he also does surprisingly well, on the grounds that Godard and Chabrol learned from him the use of "pointless actor mobility." And since Ophuls consistently maintained in interviews that he was doing what he wanted to do, Salt gives him points on the third criterion, of intentionality, also. Thus late Ophuls comes out as being high-quality film-making, even though Salt notes that "if I were proceeding by my feelings alone I would rate the last three Ophuls films rather low." His posture in the face of this apparent contradiction is to stick proudly by his theoretical guns, contending that such "personality factors" are mere subjective elements that must be eliminated as far as possible.

It is one of Salt's chief complaints against conventional criticism and history that they are impressionistic and do not last. Will tortuous "objectivity" of the kind he practices on Ophuls last longer than, say, last week's column by Pauline Kael? I beg leave to doubt it. (What remains miraculous is that some *films* do last, continuing to mean something important to people, even though that something may undergo severe sea changes as the decades pass.)

I must now deal with a curious and unsettling aspect of Salt's book. Reading his introductory material (not to mention his Acknowledgements or copyright page), you would have no idea that a great deal of his work has been published, with enthusiasm, by one of the world's most respectable film journals—the one, indeed, that you are holding in your hands. Salt's pose is of the solitary innovator oppressed and censored by the establishment,

against whom he levels dark charges. The section of historical record which Salt is here suppressing is extensive:

"Statistical Style Analysis," *Film Quarterly,* Fall 1977.

"Film Style and Technology in the Thirties," *Film Quarterly,* Fall 1976.

"Film Style and Technology in the Forties," *Film Quarterly,* Fall 1977.

He also published "Film Form, 1900-1906" in *Sight and Sound,* Summer 1978. These are all lengthy articles, and they must be familiar to most of the people in the world who care about serious film studies. (They are cited, for instance—though not discussed—in Robert C. Allen and Douglas Gomery's *Film History: Theory and Practice* [New York: Knopf, 1985].) Moreover, this material amounts, at a rough guess, to something like half of the book.

Why then would a person who not only pronounces himself devoted to the most objective formulations of scientific truth, but also damns Marxists for distorting history, blithely toss so much down his own Truth Hole?

Alas, I happen to know the reason for Salt's omissions: pique. What now forms the first three chapters of the book, "Old Film Theory, New Film Theory," "The Interpretation of Films," and "French Film Theory into English" were rejected for publication, and in a number of quarters. Salt asserts that they were rejected by *Sight & Sound, Movie, Screen,* and the *Quarterly Review of Film Studies,* as well as *Film Quarterly,* "with no reasons given." (This may be true of the other journals; it is false about *Film Quarterly.*) The context here is that the pieces early became part of a book manuscript, incorporating the published *Film Quarterly* articles, which Salt submitted to the University of California Press book program. This manuscript was duly subjected to the usual outside-referee procedure which Salt, from his background in science, knows is an essential component of the scientific and scholarly publication process. These reports suggested some revisions and strengthenings of the manuscript but also strongly recommended deletion of the introductory chapters, which seemed to a variety of readers philosophically shallow, tendentious and ill-humored in style, and likely to detract from the salubrious impact of the rest of the manuscript. Salt then withdrew the manuscript, which evidently made the rounds of other publishers, at least in Britain, with similar results, until finally Salt, convinced of a cabal against him, decided to publish it himself and be damned.

As a writer who has been forced into self-publication myself, with my *Ecotopia,* I have a good deal of sympathy for Salt's position (a fact, incidentally, which he has long known). His manuscript received thoughtful review from appropriate scholars—none of whom, as it happens, holds doctrinaire views; indeed they were all sympathetic to his basic methodology. But it sometimes happens, even in science, that something about the way ideas are argued offends people. (Max Planck, the great physicist, also believed that new ideas only prevail by the dying off of the holders of old ideas.) And established scholars are apt to be particularly cautious when they feel someone has not done proper homework. My own personal reactions to Salt's first three chapters were (and remain) mixed. His wholesale condemnations of all film thought except his own often sound merely petulant and jejune (he grudgingly allows two pages for an extraordinarily select bibliography). His particular arguments, however, often have a grim hilarity, as when he reanalyzes Bellour's study of the traffic patterns at the crossroads in *North by Northwest* by using a bunch of pins dropped on a table, or shows why Metz's *grande syntagmatique* could not reliably segment films, or explains why Althusser needed a course in elementary logic to distinguish between *necessary* and *necessary and sufficient,* or traces the bizarre manipulations by which Lacan arrives at

$$\text{signifier} = \sqrt{-(\text{Ego Ideal})}$$

—an imposing though perhaps not unbeatable landmark in pseudoscientific gibberish. Salt has a wicked genius for this sort of deconstruction; he's like a terrier determined to gnaw every rotten strip off a particularly ripe bone. But this spectacle is not everybody's idea of a good time, and whether it will draw readers to Salt's actual achievement or repel them, we must wait and see. (Salt has done a professional job of producing the book,

which is attractively illustrated; its single flaw technically is a line length so great [32 picas] that the text is a bit difficult to read.)

While Salt attempts to discredit pretty much everything that has ever been done in the way of film "theory"—or simply ignores it, as he does with Arnheim, Eisenstein, et al.—he has a curiously soft spot (where most people's heart would be) for Andrew Sarris and the auteur "theory." This odd sympathy is endearing in the same way it was to see Siegfried Kracauer making a place in his sober theory for the musicals he loved. The reason for it, I think, is that Sarris made it his business, as Salt has done, to see and remember literally thousands of films to which nobody else paid any attention, and to make some modest generalizations on that basis which often stand up reasonably well. By any rigorous test of scientific theory, as Salt well knows, there is nothing remotely theoretical about the auteur "theory," despite "implicit subsidiary analytic and interpretative components that are only demonstrated in practice."

Salt dismisses psychoanalysis in its entirety because it does not provably cure people, as presumably he would dismiss Christianity because it too does not produce statistically measurable results. He writes off the entirety of Marxist thought because Marxist predictions of social events have been disastrously wrong. He makes a hash even of the relative clarity of Umberto Eco. What then is left? Not much. Salt sketches his own approach in the fourth prefatory chapter, "Pracical Film Theory." While carefully done film studies can help us to understand what has been done in the medium, and to save what is probably most interesting from it, "Film studies are unable completely to become a real science because of the essentially innovatory, idiosyncratic, and complex nature of the art object. There are no eternal laws of aesthetics." Large abstractions such as "bourgeois ideology" are generally counterproductive, Salt thinks, and one generation's "cultural history" is the next's waste paper, but concerted attention to changing stylistic conventions can be useful, and may even be supplemented with considerations of the film-maker's personality (assessed by "scientific personality theory," in which Salt has a touchingly bizarre faith directly at odds with his modest estimate of the possibilities of dealing with relatively simple systems like films). And judgments of films may be attained through the aforementioned criteria of originality, influence, and "fulfillment of intentions" by the film-maker —this third, he acknowledges, is a troublesome matter, but one he is confident can usually be handled by "taking a little trouble." (Better film-maker interviews, for example.)

Many readers, remembering thinkers from Aristotle to Croce and after who have tackled such problems, may conclude from such passages that Salt is a hopelessly naive crank. Some such readers may even be among those who, at the end of this chapter, Salt allows (in a rare burst of generosity) may know a great deal about films and not be "totally mistaken in everything they say." For myself, I regret Salt's excesses, but it is good to have his writings laid out in proper book form where, I hope, they will finally receive due scrutiny and checking.

This checking, incidentally, will not be made easy by Salt's attitude toward sources. Many of Salt's assertions derive from his viewings of films, but his remarks on historical context often rest on nothing but his word, or perhaps on "what I already knew about filmmaking from sources I have now mostly forgotten." (p. 381) He notes, for example, that the first real camera crane was built in 1929 for Universal's production of *Broadway,* and says this is "well known." But considering the many other things in film history which are also "well known" but happen to be false, it would be nice to know where we can learn more about this without pawing through the entire 1929 file of *American Cinematographer.* A cavalier handling of sources, as Dan Greenberg will soon be reminding us in a manual of scholarly procedures for film study, is a mark of amateurism and irresponsibility. Scholars need footnotes (or source notes in the back of the book) for the same reasons that scientists need replication of experiments. On the basis of working with him for several years, and meeting him once, I can categorically state that while Barry Salt may have suppressed some textual history, I do not believe he paints his mice. Better documentation, however, would have been reassuring to more skeptical

readers. An index of topics (as well as names and film titles) would also have improved access to Salt's material, but the book is clearly organized and most things can be located or relocated without too much difficulty.
—ERNEST CALLENBACH

Bell, Geoffrey. *The Golden Gate and the Silver Screen.* Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson Press, 1984. $24.50. Before that Southern California place known first for its holly and oak trees sewed up production, the Bay Area momentarily threatened. Provided you picked your district, weather was good, scenery fine for Westerns, country drama and historical romance. Further, San Francisco had some theatrical past and investment money. Geoffrey Bell dedicatedly traces the regional history, beginning with Muybridge on the Palo Alto racetrack. Much of the text calls on research material drawn from films Bell has made about Muybridge, Essanay, and the California Motion Picture Company which tried, unsuccessfully, to sustain feature production starting in 1914. Early history is a current battleground of contention, and Bell is not a professional film historian; parts of the text repeat vulnerable materials and generalizations drawn from sources as early as Terry Ramsaye. However, eight pages of footnotes testify to a plethora of local research, conducted especially among newspapers and the resources of Northern California's historical archives. The book is further distinguished by a multitude of unfamiliar illustrations, culled from these sources and from Bell's own collection, often compiled for his films. An epilogue leapfrogs from 1927 to the *Art in Cinema* post-World War II, Peterson-Broughton-Stauffacher emergence, followed by sketches of Jordan Belson, John Korty and George Lucas. Coppola and Zoetrope are underplayed. Perhaps Bell sees them going the way of the California Motion Picture Company. —JOHN FELL

Campbell, Craig W. *Reel America and World War I.* North Carolina: McFarland, 1985. $29.95. A study of the 1914–1920 period, including annotated filmography and discussions of such works as *The Kaiser, the Beast of Berlin.* World War I, as Norman Mailer later noted about the Vietnam War, caused every type of evil "to rise from its sewer," but there was also a temporary abatement of the worst excesses of screen racism—blacks were needed for the war effort—while lynchings increased in the South and the Ku Klux Klan grew. Then 1920 and the Red Scare arrived, the country "nurturing those most selfish and conformist aspects of its nationalistic core." We *have* been there before. —E.C.

Hayes, David and Brent Walker. *The Films of The Bowery Boys: A Pictorial History of the Dead End Kids.* Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1984. $19.95. A survey of the pictures, and biographical sketches of what-happened-to-them-later, by two diehard fans.
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Pitts, Michael R. *Hollywood and American History.* McFarland, & Co., Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640, 1984. $24.95. The premise underlying this book's design is highly questionable: "fiction has long been a worthy partner of history in the search for veracity." An interesting thesis would be why Hollywood chose to interpret US history (*Baby Face Nelson, Unconquered, Abe Lincoln in Illinois*) as it did. Here such issues are sacrificed to plot.
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Reference

NEW YORK TIMES ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FILM 1896-1979

Gene Brown, ed.; Harry M. Geduld, advisory ed. New York: Times Books, 1984. 13 vols., $2,000.00 the set.

Although the *New York Times* is of course available in almost all libraries on microfilm, the justification for printing its entire file of film articles (excluding reviews) in this gigantic and expensive set is that nobody, even now, really finds microfilm easy or congenial to work with. My first reaction to this project was that the only part of it that really demanded print publication was the index—a relatively modest volume of some 340 triple-column pages—which would have made access to the microfilm convenient if not exactly delightful. A great deal of the material reprinted in the other twelve volumes is, by the most lenient standards, trivial—and amassing it in this overwhelming quantity tends to be stupefying. It is possible, I suppose, to imagine a researcher direly in need of easy access to Grace Lichtenstein's observations about taking a tour of star homes in Beverly Hills in 1971. But there is a certain maddeningly determined middlebrow quality to articles written for the Sunday *Magazine* that tends to obliterate even the interest of something like a brief interview-based note on John Huston. The most lastingly useful material in the project, I suspect, will thus be articles from the news pages of the *Times*.

The volumes are sturdily bound; the articles are reproduced from microfilm, so while the text is clear, photographs are very muddy. The indexing is thorough and complete. —E.C.

THE INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY OF FILMS AND FILMMAKERS
Vol. I: Films. Vol. II: Directors/Filmmakers

Christopher Lyon, ed. St. James Press, 213 West Institute Place, Chicago, IL 60610, 1984.

These volumes fall, in the reference universe, approximately in the same niche as the Sadoul dictionaries, though of course more up to date. The coverage in each entry is generally fuller than in Sadoul, but considerably less than half as many films and directors are included, and the coverage is also much less catholic in taste.

The *Films* volume provides excellent summaries and credits, together with a novel and very useful feature, a chronological list of publications about the film in question (not including, however, actual reviews). The selection of films can be described as mainline with a few oddities like *Rocky Horror;* a few standard documentaries and a couple of classic avant-garde works also figure. The critical accounts are much fuller than the basically plot-summary accounts given in the McGill series of volumes, and are done by a great variety of writers, some well known and some unknown.

The *Directors/Filmmakers* volume covers about 400 persons, and the critical notes on them are also of good quality. The coverage is again standard mainline people, with a few documentarians (Santiago Alvarez and Alexander Hammid) and avant-gardists (Chantal Akerman). The relative stodginess of the selection, compared to the Sadouls or other reference volumes prepared by a single writer, may be due to the heavyweight board of advisers for the project; they had, says editor Lyon, "little disagreement over the final choice" of what to include.

The level of preparation was quite careful, though spot checks inevitably reveal blunders: Paul Schrader's book is not listed, only his articles, and Bill Nichols's article on *American Gigolo* in the light of Schrader's book is also mysteriously absent; Bolesław Michałek (on Zanussi) comes out "M. Boleslaw." (The editors solicit corrections from readers, toward a subsequent edition.)

Students and others wanting an inexpensive historical overview reference work will still find the Sadouls more satisfactory, I think, but for those needing more recent coverage, or quick access to relevant readings, these volumes will constitute a reliable library resource. —ERNEST CALLENBACH

Reference

NEW YORK TIMES ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FILM 1896-1979

Gene Brown, ed.; Harry M. Geduld, advisory ed. New York: Times Books, 1984. 13 vols., $2,000.00 the set.

Although the *New York Times* is of course available in almost all libraries on microfilm, the justification for printing its entire file of film articles (excluding reviews) in this gigantic and expensive set is that nobody, even now, really finds microfilm easy or congenial to work with. My first reaction to this project was that the only part of it that really demanded print publication was the index—a relatively modest volume of some 340 triple-column pages—which would have made access to the microfilm convenient if not exactly delightful. A great deal of the material reprinted in the other twelve volumes is, by the most lenient standards, trivial—and amassing it in this overwhelming quantity tends to be stupefying. It is possible, I suppose, to imagine a researcher direly in need of easy access to Grace Lichtenstein's observations about taking a tour of star homes in Beverly Hills in 1971. But there is a certain maddeningly determined middlebrow quality to articles written for the Sunday *Magazine* that tends to obliterate even the interest of something like a brief interview-based note on John Huston. The most lastingly useful material in the project, I suspect, will thus be articles from the news pages of the *Times*.

The volumes are sturdily bound; the articles are reproduced from microfilm, so while the text is clear, photographs are very muddy. The indexing is thorough and complete. —E.C.

THE INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY OF FILMS AND FILMMAKERS
Vol. I: Films. Vol. II: Directors/Filmmakers

Christopher Lyon, ed. St. James Press, 213 West Institute Place, Chicago, IL 60610, 1984.

These volumes fall, in the reference universe, approximately in the same niche as the Sadoul dictionaries, though of course more up to date. The coverage in each entry is generally fuller than in Sadoul, but considerably less than half as many films and directors are included, and the coverage is also much less catholic in taste.

The *Films* volume provides excellent summaries and credits, together with a novel and very useful feature, a chronological list of publications about the film in question (not including, however, actual reviews). The selection of films can be described as mainline with a few oddities like *Rocky Horror;* a few standard documentaries and a couple of classic avant-garde works also figure. The critical accounts are much fuller than the basically plot-summary accounts given in the McGill series of volumes, and are done by a great variety of writers, some well known and some unknown.

The *Directors/Filmmakers* volume covers about 400 persons, and the critical notes on them are also of good quality. The coverage is again standard mainline people, with a few documentarians (Santiago Alvarez and Alexander Hammid) and avant-gardists (Chantal Akerman). The relative stodginess of the selection, compared to the Sadouls or other reference volumes prepared by a single writer, may be due to the heavyweight board of advisers for the project; they had, says editor Lyon, "little disagreement over the final choice" of what to include.

The level of preparation was quite careful, though spot checks inevitably reveal blunders: Paul Schrader's book is not listed, only his articles, and Bill Nichols's article on *American Gigolo* in the light of Schrader's book is also mysteriously absent; Bolesław Michałek (on Zanussi) comes out "M. Boleslaw." (The editors solicit corrections from readers, toward a subsequent edition.)

Students and others wanting an inexpensive historical overview reference work will still find the Sadouls more satisfactory, I think, but for those needing more recent coverage, or quick access to relevant readings, these volumes will constitute a reliable library resource. —ERNEST CALLENBACH

THE FRONTIER EXPERIENCE
A Reader's Guide to the Life and Literature of the American West

By Jon Tuska and Vicki Piekarski. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1984. $29.95.

This impressive, annotated bibliography of most things Western includes history, ethnology, ethnography and ecology. The name recognizable to film studies is Tuska, who coauthors a section on fiction and writes about films. He, particularly, bars no holds. His special enemies are sloppy translation, whether from Latin or French, lazy use of secondary sources, writers who pretend familiarity with books they've hardly skimmed, and what Tuska terms "popular culture faddists," i.e., academics who "elevate popular culture to the status of a subject . . . worthy of serious attention." He also supports a healthy attitude toward the promises and misuses of film-and-society studies. From these frames of reference, John Cawelti, Leslie Fiedler and Russel Nye are drubbed.

Tuska's fiction and film standards are several: whether ethical dimensions are seriously considered, whether representation resembles purported actuality, whether racism implicit in such traditional, critical dichotomies as civilization/savagery (stemming from Frederick Jackson Turner) is held up to scrutiny.

Puzzling omissions from the text: *The Life of an American Cowboy* (1902); *The Redman and the Child* (1908); actuality footage of the West, including Indians, in the Library of Congress Paper Print Collection; still photographers who documented the wilderness. Recommended especially to libraries.

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Bowers, Nancy Brooker. *The Hollywood Novel and Other Novels About Film, 1912-1982.* New York: Garland, 1985. Synopses (with occasional evaluative phrases) for some 500 novels. Well indexed. —E.C.

Brady, Anna, Richard Wall, and Carolynn Newitt Weiner, Editors. *Union List of Film Periodicals: Holdings of Selected American Collections.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984. $35.00. This is a basic resource for anyone doing serious film scholarship, and belongs in all research and university libraries. Unfortunately, since Los Angeles is in many respects a prime territory for film research, neither the USC nor UCLA libraries were able to provide more than cursory information on their serial holdings (which are extensive in both cases) and the same was true of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences; however, through the valiant efforts of the compilers the coverage of these institutions is described quite well. —E.C.

Cadden, Tom Scott. *What a Bunch of Characters!* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1984. $9.95 paper, $19.95 cloth. A guide to who played what in the movies. Thirty-word synopses and major player lists, indexed by film title only. Apparently aimed at quiz-show participants. For a more intelligently conceived information source, see the Lieberman & Cable volume reviewed below. —E.C.

Cline, William C. *In the Nick of Time: Motion Picture Sound Serials.* McFarland & Co., Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640, 1984. $19.95. Films are discussed not title by title, but chapter to chapter, in terms of heroes, villains, sidekicks and heroines. The approach is deeply enthusiastic. A filmography comprehensively itemizes every serial from 1930 to 1956 and includes not only credits but *every serial chapter title.* —JOHN FELL

Cywinski Ray. *Preston Sturges: A Guide to References and Resources.* Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1984. $42.00. Astonishingly little was written about Sturges during his great, remarkably productive years—or even, for that matter, during the succeeding decade—except for James Agee's almost perverse reviews. Later on, serious critics began to return to Sturges, and currently we have Brian Henderson's analyses (see notice of *Five Screenplays by Preston Sturges* elsewhere in this issue) and this survey volume, with Diane Jacobs's critical biography on the way. Cywinski's volume will be of great assistance to new researchers working on Sturges; he provides a capsule biography, an intelligent and sensible critical essay on the films, and synopses with credits, together with judicious annotations on the literature, such as it is. —E.C.

Halliwell, Leslie. *Halliwell's Film Guide, 3rd Edition.* New York: Scribner's, 1984. $17.95, paper. Now a full two inches thick, Halliwell covers more than 12,000 films, including second features, giving brief credits, synopses, and ratings.

Hardy, Phil, ed. *Science Fiction.* New York: Morrow, 1984. $24.95. The second in The Film Encyclopedia series (*The Western* was the first), *Science Fiction* is a more impressive achievement on first glance than on closer analysis. Still, it is an achievement. Documentation of the subject is thorough, if it's a bit less than exhaustive—approximately 1,300 features are listed, chronologically. The book is

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particularly strong in the areas of early silents, European films, and Mexican films. And much time, clearly, went into the selection of stills. More time, apparently, than went into the actual writing of the entries, which relies on almost comically overworked words and phrases like "marvellous" and "reds-under-the-beds." Desperation for an angle on a movie often drives the contributors back into the worst sins of the auteurists of the sixties. *Battle of the Worlds,* for instance, becomes a lesson on "how to let cinema triumph over both script and acting. . . ." Antonio Margheriti is the hero of this particular battle. In his preface, editor Hardy commendably stresses an "international perspective." He appears to have had research scouts, or connections, worldwide. Certain key errors and omissions, however, suggest that the scout for the US was not that familiar with his subject; that, perhaps, he came late to it. For example: "J. Forrest Ackerman" for "Forrest J Ackerman" (page 291). Or the identification (page 98) of a still from the 1935 *The Raven* as being from *The Walking Dead.* US release and TV titles of foreign films are, occasionally, missing, as are such obscure home-grown goodies as *Night Fright, The Yesterday Machine,* and *Women in The Night.* And, somehow, *The Creeping Terror* winds up with the credits for *The Creature Walks Among Us.*
—DON WILLIS

Justice, Keith L. *Adult Video Index '84.* McFarland & Co., Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640, 1984. $20.00. A listing, with synopses for the more appealing titles, of some 2250 cassettes currently available. (Some now come in Spanish versions.) Almost no evaluative comments; one, praising *Autobiography of a Flea,* is accurate, but the descriptions often come from catalogs and are mainly composed of performer names. —E.C.

Langman, Larry. *A Guide to American Screenwriters, The Sound Era, 1929–1982. Vol. I: Screenwriters; Vol. II: Films.* New York and London: Garland, 1984. $88.00. These companion volumes list some 5,000 writers and 20,000 films, simplifying the location of names and titles.

Lauritzen, Einar and Gunnar Lundquist, *American Film Index 1916–1920.* Source: Tonnheims, Mikelsbergsvaegen 348, S-14171 (Sweden). In US: Larry Edmunds and Cinemabilia bookshops. $125.00. Mostly a listing of credits covering the period up to the AFI's feature-film index for 1921–1930, but also includes capsule histories of production companies, many of them intriguingly fly-by-night. About 12,000 films are covered, in 756 pages.
—E.C.

Lieberman, Susan and Frances Cable (comps.). *Memorable Film Characters.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984. $29.95, cloth. Provides thumbnail sketches, listed by character name, of about 1500 figures in silent and sound films from US and Europe. The sketches often give the flavor of the story involved. Selection, while inherently somewhat arbitrary, was governed largely by acting awards and published critical attention, plus a questionnaire to 75 movie buffs (all but one responded!).
—E.C.

Maltin, Leonard, ed. *Leonard Maltin's TV Movies, 1985–86.* New York: NAL, 1984. $9.95. This trusty guide now carries a new teaser line, "The Essential Guide for Home Video Rentals," and Maltin foresees one of its main functions being to guide people who are discovering "the astonishing amount of wit and intelligence" in films of the thirties and forties. Capsule plots and director + stars credits for some 16,000 films. —E.C.

Oshana, Maryann. *Women of Color: A Selected Filmography.* New York: Garland, 1985. $30.00. This rather unlikely filmographical study looks at about 900 feature films from the perspective of the non-white female characters who happen to be in them (usually only one per film). Many of these characters—Jane Russell as the "half-breed" in *The Outlaw,* Rita Moreno in *City of Gold*—were actually played by white actresses, except for servant and other minor roles. The overall effect of the brief synopses builds up a surprisingly intense sense of the overwhelming scope and depth of American racism, though there are a few honorable exceptions. The selection is from 1930 to 1982, and only American (plus a few British) studio films are included; thus black-produced independent films are not included. —E.C.

Ottoson, Robert L. *American International Pictures: A Filmography.* New York: Garland, 1985. A chronological listing of AIP product from 1954 to 1980. Entries feature director, writer, photographer, cast-and-characters, and synopsis. All names and titles are indexed. If some of your favorite "Z" titles from the late fifties seem to be missing, remember that AIP was not the only mass-marketer of trash-art back then. —DON WILLIS

Sigoloff, Marc. *The Films of the Seventies.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1984. $29.95. Credits, cast, and brief annotations on 942 US and British films.

Skinner, John Walter. *Who's Who on the Screen.* Worthing, England: Madeleine Productions, 1983. £6.95. The editor of *International Film Collector* has compiled career details on 830 performers. Illustrated. —E.C.

Willis, Donald C. *Horror and Science Fiction Films, Vol. III.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1984. $25.00. In this engaging continuation of his previous surveys, Willis covers new films of the 1982–1983 period, but also throws in large numbers of earlier works that he had missed in previous volumes—going back to such oddities as *Betty Boop's Ups and Downs* (1932), a cartoon in which Saturn

buys Earth and eliminates gravity, with dismaying consequences for Betty. He also prefaces the volume with grateful thanks to *Famous Monsters* magazine, recently defunct, one of the last of the true fan publications. Many of the films summarized by Willis are of course ghoulish in the extreme, but he has kind and measured words to say about some little-noticed films (like John Korty's *Twice Upon a Time*) as well as harsh words about some others (like *Britannia Hospital* and even *Vertigo*, "perhaps better analyzed than seen"). Willis is our most faithful scout into filmic territories only erratically glimpsed by most of us: *Blonde Goddess, Gayracula*. . . . —E.C.

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Technical Works

ON FILM EDITING

By Edward Dmytryk. Stoneham, MA: Focal Press, 1984. $9.95 paper.

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Dmytryk works with multiple examples, starting from marked-up scripts in many cases, to show exactly how the editing process can sharpen, salvage, reshape or ruin a scene. His perspective is, of course, within the general confines of what is sometimes loosely called the classic Hollywood style: that style which sought invisibility, in which almost anything obvious to the viewer was taken to be a mistake. And he codifies the rules of this kind of cutting in a finer-grained way than anybody has yet done—and in a brisk, readable, and easily applicable text.

Some of his rules will be familiar to readers who have studied previous manuals on the subject, or simply looked closely at film cuts on a viewing table or Moviola ("Whenever possible, cut 'in movement'"—the so-called "action cut"). But even here, Dmytryk offers refinements of the common view or practice: for instance, such cuts in fact work perfectly well without a measurable difference in image size between the two shots. And more importantly, he establishes a technique of a 5-frame overlap on exit-and-entrance-in-next-shot situations, not commonly used but which smoothes such cuts remarkably. (It is interesting that Dmytryk thinks in terms of precise eye movements, down to the fifth of a second involved here, about many aspects of the cutter's art.)

Another novel rule—which has been broken fruitfully by Antonioni but still remains a useful rule—is that extra footage (which may sometimes be needed for a variety of reasons, or is an ineluctable component of a shot) is best placed at the beginning of action rather than after it, where it risks seeming vacuous. Dmytryk is not, however, always fond of the safe course; he cites a scene in his own *Murder My Sweet* where he desperately over-rode blatant mismatches in lighting from cut to cut in order to focus on dramatic and visual "values" rather than on strict continuity, and says nobody has ever complained of this, either in print or in numerous seminar situations.

On Film Editing will interest anybody who has occasion to join two film images together. It also conveys much of the intensity and daring of the true cutter's art—which, like lighting, is one of the things that chiefly determine whether a film "works" or not, though critics seldom have time or inclination to pay close attention to it.

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Miscellaneous

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The book is serious talk about serious film artistry, but is remarkably free of pretension. Even a bit of humor occasionally crops up, as when Almendros contrasts European and American styles of film-making. "In America," he says drolly, "you have more gaffers, more grips, more coffee and more doughnuts." *A Man With a Camera* is an entirely delightful, extremely readable diary of a cameraman.

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When Almendros talks about his aesthetic approach and lighting techniques, he readily admits that, in most circumstances, "I didn't really invent anything, of course." But what he did do was to take these influences and techniques, assimilate them into his own personal style and then apply and extend them in an extremely artistic and creative way. Because of that, his films tend to be a much richer visual and emotional experience for the viewer.

The book is serious talk about serious film artistry, but is remarkably free of pretension. Even a bit of humor occasionally crops up, as when Almendros contrasts European and American styles of film-making. "In America," he says drolly, "you have more gaffers, more grips, more coffee and more doughnuts." *A Man With a Camera* is an entirely delightful, extremely readable diary of a cameraman.

—DENNIS SCHAEFER

HOLLYWOOD DYNASTIES

By Stephen Farber and Marc Green. New York: Delilah/Putnam, 1984. $16.95.

Hollywood Dynasties, a book on which both printer and publisher have done a very attrac-

tive layout job, concerns the corporate takeover of modern Hollywood by second- and third-generation members of clan families. The book says this is a good thing: both that the new films are better, and that what used to be called nepotism when it involved male heirs is a socially beneficial breakthrough when the gift jobs go to wives, sisters and daughters.

The opening 120 pages of *Dynasties* are an unhappy attempt to historicize the whole Golden Age, studio by studio. But structurally this is a mere preface to what really interests the authors: a collective Making-It account of the younger postwar generation in our film colony. *Dynasties* is breezily written, it has an interestingly complex thesis to structure its material, and the long interview sections which are its research material are valuable and can in fact be generalized beyond what Farber and Green do with their data themselves. I am about to say some harsh things about *Dynasties,* but I will almost certainly be citing it next time I publish on political or social matters, if not on film. My film-brat daughter, who listened to me argue out loud with the book while I read it, claims I enjoy *Dynasties* but won't admit it.

The centerpiece of the book, its guts, is a series of family-history chapters on some Hollywood clans: Fondas, Ladds, Kirk Douglases, Mankiewiczes. (The Coppolas, who get a separate later chapter, are distinguished from the New Aristocrats as more a throwback to the first-generation Selznick-Schulberg types in the business.) The book is n.d.g. on prewar Hollywood, but it blossoms when it can deal with the late sixties. Farber and Green are better on Jane Fonda than on Henry, and better on Peter Fonda than on Jane.

Working from interviews inclines Farber and Green to lose themselves in the details of old filial wars, like the clash between Irene Mayer Selznick and Edith Mayer Goetz; these might better be left to the novelistic talents of an Auchincloss or an Anthony Powell. Farber and Green's intention, very ambitiously, is to do simultaneously a company-town history of Hollywood but at the same time an Adlerian psychiatric shrink job on all its ruling families. Supposedly, as the book's younger clan characters work out how they really felt about Mom & Dad, they and the industry started making more adult movies. When in contradiction Joseph Mankiewicz tells them in one interview that you can't do a script in contemporary Hollywood if it's too literate, this is preshrunk by the authors into a neurotic's frustrated effusion, and they go back to their happy ending: all the cozy appointive jobs rung up by the descendants of Joseph and Herman Mankiewicz.

On the films produced by this new generation, the thesis of *Dynasties* is that they are a psychic chart of ruling-family tensions. The famous buddy-buddy movies of the Newman-Redford era represent a hang-loose premarital period in the producers' lives, but the more recent plots concern raising families: *Turning Point, Kramer vs. Kramer, Ordinary People.* The watershed movie in the changeover is *Godfather I* (1972), which Farber and Green say everybody "reads" as a family soap, not generically as a gangster film. There's no question Farber and Green are on to something here, and their book even has the very unusual vice, in a Hollywood volume, of not being morally hard enough on its people and on their films, simply because the authors admire them too much. The inspirational prose on the closing pages would suit an Oscar acceptance.

There are, however, problems. First, Farber-Green confuse republishing in their book what someone said in an interview, with doing factual research on the topic under discussion. If they had been assigned to *All the President's Men,* they would have (conscientiously) taped "Deep Throat" and then simply republished, without further checking. So if Peter Fonda for example says something intelligent about how Henry rehearsed one of his roles, it goes in the book. But if Peter makes the dubious claim about his *Easy Rider's* having had the greatest showbiz impact of any of the Fondas, both these remarks go in the book, as of equal value; and this is a general rule for all the interviews.

A main research trap with group interviews within one folk community is the folklore consensus assumption which has become accepted "fact." Everybody interviewed "knows" the 3 Mile Island incident benefited

China Syndrome's gross, so in an expanded form this assumption goes into *Dynasties* as researched fact. But at the time 3 Mile Island occurred, *Variety* did a typically professional article, researching the exhibitors on the disaster's impact. (3 Mile Island only happened after *China* had had both its promotional campaign and its initial release.) *Variety* concluded that the box-office reports showed no significant blip or tilt after the news stories hit; the mass audience had apparently predecided it wanted to see Jane Fonda in a No-Nukes thriller.

The mistake about *China* is from a section of *Dynasties* where the authors at least have good empathy with the films and the filmmakers. On the older big-studio days, Farber and Green have no corresponding feel for the era, are factually imprecise, cannot critically discriminate, operate from a probably irrelevant psychiatric approach, and dislike the people. It thus becomes hard in a review to cite one sample error, since they begin early by misdating some films (*Wings, Once in a Lifetime*) and go on from there.

Let us try them on early-sound Universal, where the *Dynasties* production history is written as a kind of psychoanalysis of its executive, Carl Laemmle, Jr. Farber and Green start off wrong by sharing the general amusement at a 21-year-old boss, apparently because nobody has yet told them that Irving Thalberg had previously managed the same studio successfully while still too young legally to sign the firm's checks.

They do a long critique of Junior Laemmle's management strategy of costly prestige films to head up Universal's film program. Since Junior opened big, with *All Quiet on the Western Front,* and since, excepting MGM, the early thirties depression destroyed profits at every studio in town, (1) we need some technical comparative evidence to show how Junior could have done better, (2) we need some firsthand evaluation of Junior's films (by directors like Ford, Wyler and James Whale) to learn how critically honorable was Junior's "failure," and finally (3) we need no Los Angeles interviews at all because the Laemmle firm business records, the evidence for the *Dynasties* thesis, are available at the Elmhurst NY address of Richard Koszarski, whom apparently Farber and Green failed to contact. The book's comparable discussions of Goldwyn, Selznick, Mayer *et al.* seem to me a writeoff as film history, or any time *Dynasties* goes back earlier than Kirk Douglas, who by the way gave them an interesting no-bull interview. (It seems one of Kirk's sons once complained to him how tough it was to be Douglas's son in Hollywood and Kirk reasonably suggested he change his name, the same way the old man did.)

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—JAMES MARK PURCELL

MASTERS OF LIGHT
Conversations with Contemporary Cinematographers

By Dennis Schaefer and Larry Salvato. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985. $27.50.

Interviews in depth with 15 of the new generation of cameramen (from Almendros to Willis) who have emerged on the world film scene in the past decade. Reading the book is like taking a class and hearing about life on the set, ways of preserving a consistent style, and solutions to especially difficult lighting problems. —E.C.

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Barker, Martin, ed. *The Video Nasties.* Pluto Press, 51 Washington Street, Dover, NH 03820,

1985. $5.25 paper. A draconian new precensorship bill with ominous implications for the future of free media in Britain has been set in motion by a debate over violent punkish films (largely Italian or American) circulating in cassette form. Barker himself contributes a very intriguing notion that the real "crime" of these films is to do what many theoreticians have been speculating on: departing from the narrative "identification" norms of the traditional cinema story, and thus raising nasty issues (rape, murder, pain) which cannot be comfortably resolved in the last reel. Much of the book deals with the debate, involving sleazy politicians, phony sociologists, and the Victorian nostalgia of the Thatcher government. Not a pretty picture. —E.C.

Considine, David M. *The Cinema of Adolescence.* North Carolina: McFarland, 1985. $19.95. Considine focuses on a wide range of American films from the standpoint of how they portray adolescent life, how their image of American life looks to adolescent viewers, and how various issues of sexuality, work, power, parenthood, family, delinquency, etc. have been presented to adolescents from 1930 to date. An interesting perspective, but the commentary is mostly bland and obvious.
—E.C.

Crist, Judith. *Take 22: Moviemakers on Moviemaking.* New York: Viking, 1984. $25.00. From the documents before us, the Tarrytown film weekends that Woody Allen satirized in *Stardust Memories* were in reality highly intelligent and congenial discussions, where interesting film-makers showed their films to a group of enthusiasts and discussed them afterwards in enlightening detail, though with plenty of Hollywood anecdotes thrown in. (Allen apparently came back several times himself.) The guests included here are both directors and performers (22 in all), from Peter Bogdanovich through Gena Rowlands to Blake Edwards and Julie Andrews. (*Not* Allen.) Crist's own questions are often penetrating and the audiences don't do too badly, but the appeal, of course, is to see the thinking that goes on behind the scenes. —E.C.

Hollins, Timothy. *Beyond Broadcasting: Into the Cable Age.* London: BFI Books, 1984. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press.) $11.95, paper. Expenditures on entertainment and media are a fixed-sum game, but so far cable has grown more than cinema has shrunk. Now the surprising spread of cassettes has changed things, and the future still seems inscrutable, with satellite-to-home transmission the new big question mark. A good survey of the business. —E.C.

Jenkins, Bruce and Susan Krane. *Hollis Frampton: Recollections Recreations.* Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1984. $15.00 hardcover. This beautifully produced book is actually the catalogue of an exhibition at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo (Frampton taught film-making at SUNY Buffalo until his death last year). Krane contributes an introductory essay that establishes Frampton's general position in the art world (focusing on his still photography) and suggests something of his unusually ironic and articulate intelligence. Jenkins provides a "tour" of the phases of his photography. Frampton himself gives brief annotations to reproductions of a large number of his photographs, but little is said by anybody about his films, though they are listed in the chronology of his works. —E.C.

Lowry, W. McNeil, ed. *The Arts and Public Policy in the United States.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984. $14.95 cloth, $7.95 paper. The eminences gathered for "The American Assembly" by Columbia University somberly discussed many aspects of art in America, but as far as I can tell no word about film ever passed anybody's lips except for an occasional reference to "the entertainment industry," and documents such as this will only serve to further enrage film artists at the arts establishment. —E.C.

MacDonald, J. Fred. *Blacks and White TV.* Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1983. $23.95 cloth; $11.95 paper. A carefully documented and closely reasoned study of how TV's initial promise of greater participation for (and appeal to) blacks was gradually betrayed, until the medium can now—with the sole exception of sports coverage—be considered one of the main destructive influences in American culture on the black self-image, as well as misleading whites about blacks and black life. (Even commercials, if statistically analyzed, are demeaning to blacks.) MacDonald's general verdict is that while white viewers too are ill-served by TV, the situation for blacks is truly dismal.
—E.C.

Maltby, Richard. *Harmless Entertainment: Hollywood and the Ideology of Consensus.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1983. Worth reading for its intriguing, often original observations about particular films and the output of individual directors, and for its idiosyncratic style and verse, this quirky book labors under a crude thesis that grows increasingly problematic when it is applied. The thesis is that commercial constraints, abetted by the narrative structures and performance features of Hollywood, produce consensually conservative films designed to deaden the audience's self-consciousness; such films are "harmless entertainment" rendering the audience politically passive. For Maltby, this filmic consensus is not static; it has evolved in reaction to populist, liberal, and anarchist trends in American society. There are, moreover, always dissenters, usually directors, who subvert the consensus by forcing the audience into actively responding to their films. Among them are Anthony Mann, Howard Hawks, and Don Siegel. Maltby's view of the audience reaction as determined by a film's narrative and performance structures is question-

able. At least some audience members bring beliefs, experiences, judgments to bear on the movies they see: the audience can dissent as well as a film-maker. Indeed, in his failure to see the "dissent" in *Body and Soul* and in *High Noon*—the way both films accept and then exploit a conventional genre to present a radical message—Maltby is sometimes victim of the very passivity with which he tars the audience. —DAVID L. PALETZ AND PAUL FELDMAN

Oumano, Ellen, ed. *Film Forum: Thirty five top filmmakers discuss their craft.* New York: St. Martin's Press. $15.95. The most innovative aspect of this book of collected interviews is its organization of the material. Most compilations of this sort give us one director after another. Oumano takes a different approach by editing and regrouping the directors' comments under specific headings such as Cinematography, Actors, Structure and Rhythm, Movie Business, etc. I'm not convinced this is a better way of doing things, just different. The eclectic list of 35 interviewees includes Akerman and Straub as well as George Romero, Michael Powell, Sidney Lumet and Godard. It makes for pleasant enough reading with occasional gems, all of which is predicated on your opinions of the directors. The major hitch is that we have no idea as to why these particular film-makers were chosen: studied heterogeneity, personal preference, national or aesthetic considerations? Some inaccuracies also slip into the brief filmographies such as no mention of Chantal Akerman's *News From Home* and attributing Alan Rudolph's *Remember My Name* to Robert Altman (who *produced*). Finally, I would have liked to see a team interview of Jean-Marie Straub and Daniele Huillet the same way Joan Micklin Silver and husband Raphael are presented. —FABRICE ZIOLKOWSKI

Palmer, Christopher. *Dimitri Tiomkin: A Portrait.* Scolar Press, 2430 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, CA 94704, 1984. $25.00. Palmer is one of the few writers who can explain film music to non-musicians without falling into fan rhapsodies or vague impressionism. He provides an entertaining biographical section on Tiomkin's early life in St. Petersburg and his musical training. Then he traces Tiomkin's work from his remarkable first full score (*Lost Horizon,* 1937, which Capra originally brought in at five hours long) through the other scores he regards as "landmarks" in one way or another: *Duel in the Sun,* with its "neo-Wagnerian extravaganza" finale; the western "trilogy" *Red River, Rio Bravo* and *The Alamo; High Noon,* a tour de force in its unorthodoxies and variations on a single theme; the Hitchcock trilogy *Strangers on a Train, I Confess,* and *Dial M for Murder; Land of the Pharaohs,* his first "super-epic"; *Gunfight at the OK Corral;* and a half dozen others. Examples of Tiomkin's working score sheets and final conducting scores are included; illustrations show Tiomkin with his collaborators, and some of the sheet-music spin-offs of his scores. Perhaps because Tiomkin was 40 before he really began composing, his work shows a strong tendency to do the unexpected (he also spent some time playing vaudeville piano). With a list of awards and a filmography. —E.C.

Penney, Edmund. *A Dictionary of Media Terms.* New York: Putnams, 1984. $14.95 cloth. An attempt to update existing glossaries (and also the vocabulary of film workers) for some 1400 terms. Well done, though Penney misses the boat on *film noir* and has the usual ambiguity about zooms/dollies. —E.C.

Poole, Mike and John Wyver. *Powerplays: Trevor Griffiths Television.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984. Griffiths is a dramatist much of whose work has been committed to British television, though he is best known here as the original scenarist of *Reds.* Many of the problems addressed in the study apply quite generally to dramatic works attempting to deal with ideas, so unfamiliarity with Griffiths's work does not make the book impossible to read with profit. It is intriguing to learn, also, that in many respects less violence was done to Griffiths's work on *Reds* than has been assumed. Lately Griffiths's main concerns are with the fascist and racist trends that increasingly haunt declining Britain, but he is not averse to working in Hollywood again, especially in view of the drastic economizing that has struck British television production. —E.C.

Rothel, David. *Those Great Cowboy Sidekicks.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1984. If this subject is of interest at all, then Rothel's look at thirty-nine comic Western sidekicks is the best treatment available, despite its idolatrous tone, filmographies limited to titles in continuing series, and repeated photos of aged actors seated next to the author, a sidekick's sidekick. For non-aficionados, the essays provide an angle on a few actors whose careers were of some interest before their serial Western days (e.g., Al St. John) or after (Slim Pickins, Chill Wills). Don Miller's *Hollywood Corral* (1976) remains the most useful map for those heading into the expanses of the B Western. For those already hopelessly gone, the periodical *B Western in Perspective* (P.O. Box 591, Stokesdale, NC 27357) provides harder facts. But only in Rothel can one discover that Smiley Burnette once wrote eleven songs in eight hours or the disillusioning information that Gabby Hayes was a connoisseur of French wine. —SCOTT SIMMON

Smith, Myron J. Jr. *U.S. Television Network News.* Jefferson, NC: MacFarland, 1984. $29.95, cloth. Some 3214 entries, some with annotations.

Watters, James and Horst. *Return Engagement: Faces to Remember—Then & Now.* New York, Crown, 1984. $24.95. Life does not stop after the

utmost in objectification—becoming a Hollywood female star—and many of the women in this collection of photographs look more interesting now than they did in their lacquered youth. Why, however, should all the faces be female—don't men age too? And why not print shots from their *work,* instead of posed studio publicity shots? —E.C.

Zeffirelli, Franco. *Franco Zeffirelli's 'Jesus': A Spiritual Diary.* San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984. $13.95. Zeffirelli is probably the only filmmaker since Carl Dreyer to have aimed at a portrayal of Jesus as visibly and culturally semitic. This is an account of the planning and shooting of the 1974 film. —E.C.

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OCTOBER

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A Special Issue on Hollis Frampton

The Spring 1985 issue is devoted to the late Hollis Frampton, a filmmaker, photographer, critic, and theoretician of great importance to *October*. His "Notes on Composing in Film" were published in the first issue; later pieces in *October* included his essay on Edward Weston, a selection of short fictions, and an interview about his early work by Scott MacDonald.

Articles in this special issue:

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